

The English Dramatists



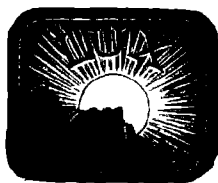
VOLUME THE SECOND

THE WORKS
OF
THOMAS MIDDLETON

EDITED BY
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IN EIGHT VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND



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PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

Four hundred copies of this Edition have been printed
and the type distributed *No more will be published*

GENTLEMEN,

You have the first sight of him, I assure you This *Mayor of Queenborough*, whom you have all heard of, and some of you beheld upon the stage, now begins to walk abroad in print he has been known sufficiently by the reputation of his wit, which is enough, by the way, to distinguish him from ordinary mayors, but wit, you know, has skulked in corners for many years past,¹ and he was thought to have most of it that could best hide himself Now whether this magistrate feared the decimating times, or kept up the state of other mayors, that are bound not to go out of their liberties during the time of their mayoralty, I know not 'tis enough for me to put him into your hands, under the title of an honest man, which will appear plainly to you, because you shall find him all along to have a great pique to the rebel Oliver I am told his drollery yields to none the English drama did ever produce, and though I would not put his modesty to the blush, by speaking too much in his commendation, yet I know you will agree with me, upon your better acquaintance with him, that there is some difference in point of wit betwixt the *Mayor of Queenborough* and the *Mayor of Huntingdon* ²

¹ The play-houses had been shut up by the Puritans

² Huntingdon was the birth-place of Oliver Cromwell

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CONSTANTIUS, }
 AURELIUS AMBROSIUS, } *sons of CONSTANTINE*
 ÛTHER PENDRAGON, }
 VORTIGER
 VORTIMER, *his son*
 DEVONSHIRE, } *British lords*
 STAFFORD, }
 GERMANUS, } *monks*
 LUPUS, }
 HENGIST
 HORSUS
 SIMON, *a tanner, Mayor of Queenborough*
 AMINADAB, *his clerk*
 OLIVER, *a fustian-weaver*
Glover
Barber
Tailor
Felt-monger
Button-maker
Graziers
Players
Gentlemen
Murderers
Soldiers, Footmen, &c

 CASTIZA, *daughter to DEVONSHIRE*
 ROXENA, *daughter to HENGIST*
Ladies

 RAYNULPH HIGDEN, *Monk of Chester, as Chorus*

THE MAYOR OF QUEENBOROUGH

—o—

ACT I

Enter RAYNULPH ¹

Ray What Raynulph, monk of Chester, can
Raise from his Polychronicon,
That raiseth him, as works do men,
To see long parted light agen,
That best may please this round fair ring, *h*
With sparkling diamonds circled in,
I shall produce If all my powers
Can win the grace of two poor hours,²

¹ Raynulph Higden, the compiler of the *Polychronicon*, was a Benedictine of St Werberg's monastery in Chester, where he died, in or about 1360. His chronicle, translated into English by John de Trevisa, was printed by Caxton in 1482.

² The ordinary length of a performance seems to have been two hours. Cf. Prologue to *Henry VIII* —

“ Those that come to see
Only a show or two, and so agree
The play may pass, if they be still and willing,
I ll undertake may see away their shilling
In *two short hours* ”

See also the Induction to *Michaelmas Term*, Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*, &c

Well apaid I go to rest
 Ancient stories have been best , 10
 Fashions, that are now call'd new,
 Have been worn by more than you ,
 Elder times have us'd the same,
 Though these new ones get the name
 So in story what now told
 That takes not part with days of old ?
 Then to approve time's mutual glory,
 Join new time's love to old time's story [Exit

SCENE I

*Before a Monastery*¹

Shouts within , then enter VORTIGER, carrying the crown

Vort Will that wide-throated beast, the multitude,
 Never leave bellowing? Courtiers are ill
 Advisèd when they first make such monsters
 How near was I to a sceptre and a crown !
 Fair power was even upon me , my desires
 Were casting glory, till this forkèd rabble,

¹ "The place of action is not noted in the old ed , and Middleton seems to have troubled himself little about the matter After some hesitation, I have marked the present scene '*Before a Monastery*,' on account of what Constantius says at p 12

' In mind

I will be always *here*, *here* let me stay
 That the scene cannot be *within* the monastery, is shown by the
 entrance of the two Grazers "—*Dyce*

With their infectious acclamations,
Poison'd my fortunes for Constantine's sons
Well, though I rise not king, I'll seek the means
To grow as near to one as policy can, 10
And choke their expectations

Enter DEVONSHIRE and STAFFORD

Now, good lords,
In whose kind loves and wishes I am built
As high as human dignity can aspire,
Are yet those trunks, that have no other souls
But noise and ignorance, something more quiet?

Devon Nor are they like to be, for aught we gather
Their wills are up still, nothing can appease them,
Good speeches are but cast away upon them

Vort Then, since necessity and fate withstand me,
I'll strive to enter at a straiter passage 20
Your sudden aid and counsels, good my lords

Staff They're ours no longer than they do you service

*Enter CONSTANTIUS in the habit of a monk, attended by
GERMANUS and LUPUS as they are going into the
monastery, VORTIGER stays them*

Vort Vessels of sanctity, be pleas'd a while
To give attention to the general peace,
Wherein heaven is serv'd too, though not so purely
Constantius, eldest son of Constantine,
We here seize on thee for the general good,
And in thy right of birth

Const. On me ! for what, lords ?

Vort The kingdom's government.

Const O powers of blessedness,

Keep me from growing downwards into earth again ! 30

I hope I'm further on my way than so —

Set forwards !

Vort You must not

Const How !

Vort I know your wisdom

Will light upon a way to pardon us,

When you shall read in every Briton's brow

The urg'd necessity of the times

Const What necessity can there be in the world,

But prayer and repentance ? and that business

I am about now

Vort Hark, afar off still !

We lose and hazard much — Holy Germanus

And reverend Lupus, with all expedition

40

Set the crown on him

Const No such mark of fortune

Comes near my head

Vort My lord, we're forc'd to rule you

Const Dare you receive heaven's light in at your eye-
lids,

And offer violence to religion ?

Take heed,

The very beam let in to comfort you

May be the fire to burn you On these knees,

[*Kneeling*

Harden'd with zealous prayers, I entreat you

Bring not my cares into the world again !
Think with how much unwillingness and anguish 50
A glorified soul parted from the body
Would to that loathsome jail again return :
With such great pain a well-subdu'd affection
Re-enters worldly business

Vort Good my lord,

I know you cannot lodge so many virtues,
But patience must be one As low as earth

[*Kneeling with DEVONSHIRE and STAFFORD*

We beg the freeness of your own consent,
Which else must be constrain'd , and time it were
Either agreed or forc'd. Speak, good my lord,
For you bind up more sins in this delay 60
Than thousand prayers can absolve again

Const Were't but my death, you should not kneel so
long for't

• *Vort* 'Twill be the death of millions if you rise not,
And that betimes too — Lend your help, my lords,
For fear all come too late

[*They rise and raise CONSTANTIUS.*

Const This is a cruelty

That peaceful man did never suffer yet,
To make me die again, that once was dead,
And begin all that ended long before
Hold, Lupus and Germanus you are lights
Of holiness and religion , can you offer 70
The thing that is not lawful ? stand not I
Clear from all temporal charge by my profession ?

Ger Not when a time so violent calls upon you

Who's born a prince, is born for ¹ general peace,
 Not his own only heaven will look for him
 In others' acts,² and will require ³ him there.
 What is in you religious, must be shown
 In saving many more souls than your own

Const Did not great Constantine, our noble father,
 Deem me unfit for government and rule, 80
 And therefore press'd ⁴ me into this profession ?
 Which I've held strict, and love it above glory
 Nor is there want of me yourselves can witness,
 Heaven hath provided largely for your peace,
 And bless'd you with the lives of my two brothers
 Fix your obedience there, leave me a servant

[*They put the crown on the head of CONSTANTIUS*]

All Long live Constantius, son of Constantine,
 King of Great Britain ¹

Const I do feel a want
 And extreme poverty of joy within ,
 The peace I had is parted 'mongst rude men , 90
 To keep them quiet, I have lost it all
 What can the kingdom gain by my undoing ?
 That riches is not best, though it be mighty,
 That's purchas'd by the ruin of another ,
 Nor can the peace, so filch'd, e'er thrive with them
 And if't be worthily held sacrilege
 To rob a temple, 'tis no less offence
 To ravish meditations from the soul,

¹ Old ed "a "

² So the old ed —Dyce reads "requite "

³ Old ed "actions "

⁴ Old ed "prais'd,"

The consecrated altar in a man
And all their hopes will be beguil'd in me ; 100
I know no more the way to temporal rule,
Than he that's born and has his years come to him
In a rough desert ¹ Well may the weight kill me ,
And that's the fairest good I look for from it

Vort Not so, great king here stoops a faithful
servant

Would sooner perish under it with cheerfulness,
Than your meek soul should feel oppression
Of ruder cares such common coarse employments
Cast upon me your servant, upon Vortiger
I see you are not made for noise and pains, 110
Clamours of suitors, injuries, and redresses,
Millions of actions, rising with the sun,
Like laws still ending, and yet never done,
Of power to turn a great man to the state
Of his marble monument with over-watching
To be oppress'd is not requir'd of you, my lord,
But only to be king The broken sleeps
Let me take from you, sir , the toils and troubles,
All that is burthenous in authority,
Please you lay it on me, and what is glorious 120
Receive't to your own brightness

Const Worthy Vortiger,
If 'twere not sin to grieve another's patience

¹ In his essay *The Superannuated Man*, Charles Lamb quoted the words "he that's born desert," but by a slight change (reading "In *some green desert*) gave a novel and richer meaning to the passage

With what we cannot tolerate ourself,
 How happy were I in thee and thy love !
 There's nothing makes man feel his miseries
 But knowledge only reason, that is plac'd
 For man's director, is his chief afflictor,
 For though I cannot bear the weight myself,
 I cannot have that barrenness of remorse,¹
 To see another groan under my burthen 130

Vort I'm quite blown up a conscionable way
 There's even a trick of murdering in some pity.
 The death of all my hopes I see already
 There was no other likelihood, for religion
 Was never friend of mine yet [Aside

Const Holy partners in strictest abstinence,
 Cruel necessity hath forc'd me from you
 We part, I fear, for ever , but in mind
 I will be always here , here let me stay

Devon My lord, you know the times 140

Const Farewell, blest souls ; I fear I shall offend
 He that draws tears from you takes your best friend

[*Exeunt* CONSTANTIUS, DEVONSHIRE, and STAFFORD, while LUPUS and GERMANUS enter the monastery

Vort Can the great motion of ambition stand,
 Like wheels false wrought by an unskilful hand ?
 Then, Time, stand thou too . let no hopes arrive
 At their sweet wishfulness, till mine set forwards.
 Would I could stay thy² existence, as I can

¹ i e pity

² Old ed "the."

Thy glassy counterfeit in hours of sand '
I'd keep thee turn'd down, till my wishes rose ;
Then we'd both rise together
What several inclinations are in nature '
How much is he disquieted, and wears royalty
Disdainfully upon him, like a curse !
Calls a fair crown the weight of his afflictions !
When here's a soul would sink under the burthen,
Yet well recover't.¹ I will use all means
To vex authority from him, and in all
Study what most may discontent his blood,
Making my mask my zeal to the public good
Not possible a richer policy
Can have conception in the thought of man

Enter two Graziers

First Graz An honourable life enclose your lordship!

Vort Now, what are you?

Second Graz Graziers, if't like your lordship

Vort So it should seem by your enclosures
What's your affair with me?

First Graz We are your
Petitioners, my lord

Vort For what? depart
Petitioners to me ' you've well deserv'd
My grace and favour Have you not a ruler
After your own election? hie you to court,

¹ Old ed "recovered."

Get near and close, be loud and bold enough, 170
 You cannot choose but speed [Exit.

Second Graz If that will do't,
 We have throats wide enough, we'll put them to't.
 [Exit.

DUMB SHOW.

FORTUNE *discovered, in her hand a round ball full of
 lots, then enters HENGIST and HORSUS, with
 others they draw lots, and having opened them,
 all depart save HENGIST and HORSUS, who kneel
 and embrace then enter ROXENA, seeming to take
 leave of HENGIST in great passion,¹ but more
 especially and warily of HORSUS, her lover she
 departs one way, HENGIST and HORSUS another*

Enter RAYNULPH.

Ray When Germany was overgrown
 With sons of peace too thickly sown,
 Several guides were chosen then
 By destin'd lots, to lead out men,
 And they whom Fortune here withstands
 Must prove their fates in other lands
 On these two captains fell the lot,
 But that which must not be forgot,
 Was Roxena's cunning grief,
 Who from her father, like a thief, 10
 Hid her best and truest tears,
 Which her lustful lover wears

¹ i. e. SORROW

In many a stolt and wary kiss,
Unseen of father Maids do this,
Yet highly scorn to be call'd strumpets too
But what they lack oft, I'll be judg'd by you. [Exit

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Palace.

*Enter VORTIGER, Felt-monger, Button-maker, Graziers,
and other Petitioners*

Vort This way his majesty comes

All Thank your good lordship

Vort When you hear yon door open—

All Very good, my lord

Vort Be ready with your several suits, put forward

Graz That's a thing every man does naturally, sir,
That is a suitor, and doth mean to speed

Vort. 'Tis well you're so deep learn'd Take no
denials.

All No, my good lord

Vort Not any, if you love

The prosperity of your suits you mar all utterly,
And overthrow your fruitful hopes for ever,
If either fifth or sixth, nay, tenth repulse
Fasten upon your bashfulness.

10

All. Say you so, my lord?

We can be troublesome if we list.

Vort I know it

I felt it but too late in the general sum
Of your rank brotherhood, which now I thank you for —
While this vexation is in play, I'll study
For a second, then a third to that, one still
To vex another, that he shall be glad
To yield up power, if not, it shall be had

[*Aside, and exit*

Butt Hark ! I protest, my heart was coming upwards
I thought the door had open'd

Graz Marry, would it had, sir ! 21

Butt I have such a treacherous heart of my own,
'twill throb at the very fall of a farthingale

Graz Not if it fall on the rushes ¹

Butt Yes, truly, if there be no light in the room, I
shall throb presently The first time it took me, my
wife was in the company I remember the room was not
half so light as this, but I'll be sworn I was a whole
hour in finding her

Graz Byrlady, y'had a long time of throbbing of it
then 31

Butt Still I felt men, but I could feel no women, I
thought they had been all sunk I have made a vow
for't, I'll never have meeting, while I live, by candle-
light again

Graz Yes, sir, in lanterns

Butt Yes, sir, in lanterns, but I'll never trust candle
naked again

¹ Before the introduction of carpets, floors were commonly strewn
with rushes

Graz. Hark, hark ! stand close : it opens now indeed !

Butt. O majesty, what art thou ! I'd give any man half my suit to deliver my petition . it is in the behalf of button-makers, and so it seems by my flesh.¹ 42

Enter CONSTANTIUS in regal attire, and two Gentlemen

Const Pray do not follow me, unless you do it
To wonder at my garments , there's no cause
I give you why you should 'tis shame enough,
Methinks, to look upon myself ,
It grieves me that more should The other weeds
Became me better, but the lords are pleas'd
To force me to wear these , I would not else
I pray be satisfied , I call'd you not 50
Wonder of madness ! can you stand so idle,
And know that you must die ?

First Gent We're all commanded, sir ,
Besides, it is our duties to your grace,
To give attendance

Const What a wild thing is this !
No marvel though you tremble at death's name,
When you'll not see the cause why you are fools
For charity's sake, desist here, I pray you !
Make not my presence guilty of your sloth
Withdraw, young men, and find you honest business

Second Gent What hopes have we to rise by following
him ? 60
I'll give him over shortly

First Gent He's too nice,

¹ " An allusion to a very gross saying, which will be found in Ray's *Proverbs*, p 179, ed 1737 '—*Dyce*.

Too holy for young gentlemen to follow
'That have good faces and sweet running fortunes

[*Exeunt Gentlemen*]

Const Eight hours a-day in serious contemplation
Is but a bare allowance, no higher food
To the soul than bread and water to the body,
And that's but needful, then more would do better

Butt Let us all kneel together, 'twill move pity
I've been at the begging of a hundred suits.

[*All the Petitioners kneel*]

Const How happy am I in the sight of you ' 70
Here are religious souls, that lose not time
With what devotion do they point at heaven,
And seem to check me that am too remiss '
I bring my zeal among you, holy men
If I see any kneel, and I sit out, [Kneels
That hour is not well spent Methinks, strict souls,
You have been of some order in your times

Graz Graziers and braziers some, and this a felt-maker

Butt Here's his petition and mine, if it like your grace [Giving petitions 81

Graz Look upon mine, I am the longest suitor, I was undone seven years ago

Const [*rising with the others*] You've mock'd
My good hopes Call you these petitions?
Why, there's no form of prayer among them all

Butt Yes, in the bottom there is half a line
Prays for your majesty, if you look on mine

Const Make your requests to heaven, not to me

Butt 'Las ' mine's a supplication for brass buttons,
SIR 91

Felt There's a great enormity in wool , I beseech your
grace consider it

Graz Pastures rise two-pence an acre , what will this
world come to '

Butt I do beseech your grace——

Graz Good your grace——

Const O, this is one of my afflictions
That with the crown enclos'd me ' I must bear it

Graz Your grace's answer to my supplication 100

Butt, Mine, my lord

Const No violent storm lasts ever ,
That is the comfort of't

Felt Your highness's answer

Graz. We are almost all undone, the country beggar'd

Butt See, see, he points at heaven, as who should say
There's enough there but 'tis a great way thither
There's no good to be done, I see that already , we may
all spend our mouths like a company of hounds in chase
of a royal deer, and then go home and fall to cold mutton-
bones, when we have done 111

Graz My wife will hang me, that's my currish destiny

[*Exeunt all except CONSTANTIUS*

Const Thanks, heaven ' 'tis o'er now we should ne'er
know rightly

The sweetness of a calm, but for a storm

Here's a wish'd hour for contemplation now ,

All's still and silent , here is a true kingdom

Re-enter VORTIGER

Vort My lord

Const Again?

Vort Alas, this is but early

And gentle to the troops of businesses

That flock about authority ' you must forthwith

Settle your mind to marry

Const How ' to marry?

120

Vort And suddenly, there's no pause to be given ,

The people's wills are violent, and covetous

Of a succession from your loins

Const From me

There can come none a profess'd abstinence

Hath set a virgin seal upon my blood,

And alter'd all the course , the heat I have

Is all enclos'd within a zeal to virtue,

And that's not fit for earthly propagation

Alas, I shall but forfeit all their hopes '

I'm a man made without desires, tell them

130

Vort I prov'd them with such words, but all were
fruitless

A virgin of the highest subject's blood

They have pick'd out for your embrace, and send her,

Bless'd with their general wishes, into fruitfulness

Lo ' where she comes, my lord

Enter CASTIZA

Const I never felt

Th' unhappy hand of misery till this touch

A patience I could find for all but this.

Cast My lord, your vow'd love ventures me but dangerously.

Vort. 'Tis but to strengthen a vexation politic

*Cast*¹ That's an uncharitable practice, trust me, sir 140

Vort No more of that

Cast But say he should affect me, sir,

How should I 'scape him then? I have but one

Faith, my lord, and that you have already,

Our late contràct is a divine witness to't.

Vort I am not void of shifting-rooms and helps

For all projects that I commit with you [Exit

Cast This is an ungodly way to come to honour,

I do not like it I love lord Vortiger,

But not these practices, they're too uncharitable

[Aside

Const Are you a virgin?

Cast Never yet, my lord,

150

Known to the will of man

Const O blessèd creature!

And does too much felicity make you surfeit?

Are you in soul assur'd there is a state

Prepar'd for you, for you, a glorious one,

In midst of heaven, now in the state you stand in,

And had you rather, after much known misery,

Cares and hard labours, mingled with a curse,

Throng but to the door, and hardly get a place there?

Think, hath the world a folly like this madness?

Keep still that holy and immaculate fire,

160

¹ Old ed "Const"

You chaste lamp¹ of eternity ' 'tis a treasure
 Too precious for death's moment to partake,
 This twinkling of short life Disdain as much
 To let mortality know you, as stars
 To kiss the pavements, you've a substance as
 Excellent as theirs, holding your pureness
 They look upon corruption, as you do,
 But are stars still, be you a virgin too

Cast I'll never marry What though my truth be
 engag'd

To Vortiger? forsaking all the world 170
 I save it well, and do my faith no wrong [Aside
 You've mightily prevail'd, great virtuous sir,
 I'm bound eternally to praise your goodness
 My thoughts henceforth shall be as pure from man,
 As ever made a virgin's name immortal

Const I will do that for joy, I never did,
 Nor ever will again

As he kisses her, re-enter VORTIGER and Gentlemen

First Gent My lord, he's taken

Vort I'm sorry for't, I like not that so well,
 They're something too familiar for their time, methinks
 This way of kissing is no way to vex him 180
 Why I, that have a weaker faith and patience,
 Could endure more than that, coming from a woman
 Despatch, and bring his answer speedily [Exit.

First Gent My lord, my gracious lord¹

¹ Old ed "lump "

Const. Beshrew thy heart !

Second Gent They all attend your grace

Const I would not have them

'Twould please me better, if they'd all depart,

And leave me to myself, or put me out,

And take it to themselves

First Gent The noon is past ,

Meat's on the table

Const Meat ! away, get from me ,

Thy memory is diseas'd , what saint's eve's this ? 190

First Gent Saint Agatha's, I take it.

Const Is it so ?

I am not worthy to be serv'd before her ,

And so return, I pray

Second Gent He'll starve the guard, if this be suffered
if we set court bellies by a monastery clock, he that
breaks a fellow's pate now, will not be able to crack a
louse within this twelvemonth

[*Aside, and exeunt Gentlemen*

Const 'Tis sure forgetfulness, and not man's will,

That leads him forth into licentious ways ,

He cannot certainly commit such errors, 200

And think upon them truly as they're acting

Why's abstinence ordain'd, but for such seasons ?

Re-enter VORTIGER.

Vort My lord, you've pleas'd to put us to much pains,
But we confess 'tis portion of our duty

Will your grace please to walk ? dinner stays for you

Const. I've answer'd that already

Vort But, my lord,
We must not so yield to you · pardon me,
'Tis for the general good, you must be rul'd, sir,
Your health and life is dearer to us now
Think where you are, at court, this is no monastery 210

Const But, sir, my conscience keeps still where it
was

I may not eat this day

Vort We've sworn you shall,
And plentifully too we must preserve you, sir,
Though you be wilful, 'tis no slight condition
To be a king

Const Would I were less than man¹

Vort You¹ will make the people rise, my lord,
In great despair of your continuance,
If you neglect the means that must sustain you

Const I never eat on eves

Vort But now you must,
It concerns others' healths that you take food 220
I've chang'd your life, you well may change your mood

Const This is beyond all cruelty

Vort 'Tis our care, my lord [Exeunt

¹ Old ed "Will you."

ACT II

SCENE I

A Room in the Palace

Enter VORRIGER and CASTIZA

Cast My lord, I am resolv'd , tempt me no farther ,
'Tis all to fruitless purpose

Vort Are you well?

Cast Never so perfect in the truth of health
As at this instant

Vort Then I doubt my own,
Or that I am not waking

Cast Would you were then !
You'd praise my resolution

Vort This is wondrous !
Are you not mine by contract ?

Cast 'Tis most true, my lord,
And I am better bless'd in't than I look'd for,
In that I am confin'd in faith so strictly
I'm bound, my lord, to marry none but you,—
You'll grant me that,—and you I'll never marry

Vort It draws me into violence and hazard :
I saw you kiss the king

Cast I grant you so, sir ,
Where could I take my leave of the world better ?
I wrong'd not you in that , you will acknowledge
A king is the best part of't

Vort O, my passion !

Cast I see you something yielding to infirmity, sir ,
I take my leave

Vort Why, 'tis not possible !

Cast The fault is in your faith , time I were gone
To give it better strengthening

Vort Hark you, lady—— 20

Cast Send your intent to the next monastery ,
There you shall find my answer ever after ,
And so with my last duty to your lordship,
For whose prosperity I will pray as heartily
As for my own [Exit

Vort How am I serv'd in this ?
I offer a vexation to the king ,
He sends it home into my blood with 'vantage
I'll put off time no longer I have brought him
Into most men's neglects, calling his zeal
A deep pride hallow'd over, love of ease 30
More than devotion or the public benefit ,
Which catcheth many men's beliefs I'm strong¹ too
In people's wishes , their affections point at me
I lose much time and glory , that redeem'd,

¹ Old ed "I am stronger "

She that now flies returns with joy and wonder
Greatness and woman's wish ne'er keep asunder [*Exit*

DUMB SHOW

Enter two Villains, to them VORTIGER, who seems to solicit them with gold, then swears them, and exit Enter CONSTANTIUS meditating, they rudely strike down his book, and draw their swords, he kneels and spreads his arms, they kill him, and hurry off the body Enter VORTIGER, DEVONSHIRE, and STAFFORD, in conference, to them the two Villains presenting the head of CONSTANTIUS, VORTIGER seems sorrowful, and in rage stabs them both Then the lords crown VORTIGER, and fetch in CASTIZA, who comes unwillingly, VORTIGER hales her, and they crown her AURELIUS and UTHUR, brothers of CONSTANTIUS, seeing him crowned, draw and fly

Enter RAYNULPH

Ray When nothing could prevail to tire
The good king's patience, they did hire
Two wicked rogues to take his life,
In whom a while there fell a strife
Of pity and fury, but the gold
Made pity faint, and fury bold
Then to Vortiger they bring
The head of that religious king,

Who feigning grief, to clear his guilt,
Makes the slaughterers' blood be spilt. 10
Then crown they him, and force the maid,
That vow'd a virgin-life, to wed,
Such a strength great power extends,
It conquers fathers, kindred, friends;
And since fate's pleas'd to change her life,
She proves as holy in a wife
More to tell, were to betray
What deeds in their own tongues must say
Only this, the good king dead,
The brothers poor in safety fled [Exit 20

SCENE II

A Hall in the Palace

Enter VORTIGER crowned, a Gentleman meeting him

Gent My lord !

Vort I fear thy news will fetch a curse, it comes
With such a violence

Gent The people are up
In arms against you

Vort O this dream of glory !
Sweet power, before I can have time to taste thee,
Must I for ever lose thee ?—What's the imposthume
That swells them now ?

Gent The murder of Constantius.

Vort Ulcers of realms ! they hated him alive,
Grew weary of the minute of his reign,

Call'd him an evil of their own electing ; 10
And is their ignorant zeal so fiery now,
When all their thanks are cold ? the mutable hearts
That move in their false breasts !—Provide me safety

[*Noise within*

Hark ! I hear ruin threaten me with a voice
That imitates thunder

Enter Second Gentleman

Second Gent. Where's the king ?

Vort Who takes him ?

Second Gent Send peace to all your royal thoughts,
my lord

A fleet of valiant Saxons newly landed
Offer the truth of all their service to you

Vort Saxons ! my wishes let them have free entrance,
And plenteous welcomes from all hearts that love us , 20

[*Exit Second Gentleman*

They never could come happier

*Re-enter Second Gentleman with HENGIST, HORSUS,
and Soldiers*

Heng Health, power, and victory to Vortiger !

Vort There can be no more pleasure to a king,
If all the languages earth spake were ransack'd.
Your names I know not , but so much good fortune
And warranted worth lightens your fair aspects,
I cannot but in arms of love enfold you

Heng The mistress of our birth's hope, fruitful Ger-
many,

Calls me Hengistus, and this captain Horsus ,
 A man low-built, but yet in deeds of arms 30
 Flame is not swifter We are all, my lord,
 The sons of Fortune , she has sent us forth
 To thrive by the red sweat of our own merits ,
 And since, after the rage of many a tempest,
 Our fates have cast us upon Britain's bounds,
 We offer you the first-fruits of our wounds

Vort Which we shall dearly prize the mean'st blood
 spent

Shall at wealth's fountain make its own content.

Heng You double vigour in us then, my lord 39
 Pay is the soul of such as thrive by the sword [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

Near the Palace

*Enter VORTIGER and Gentlemen Alarm and noise of
 skirmishes within*

First Gent My lord, these Saxons bring a fortune
 with them
 Stay[s] any Roman success

Vort. On, speak, forwards !
 I will not take one minute from thy tidings

First Gent The main supporters of this insurrection
 They've taken prisoners, and the rest so tame[d],
 They stoop to the least grace that flows from mercy.

Vort Never came power guided by better stars

Than these men's fortitudes yet they're misbelievers,
Which to my reason is wondrous

Enter HENGIST, HORSUS, and Soldiers, with Prisoners

You've given me such a first taste of your worth, 10
'Twill never from my love, when life is gone,
The memory sure will follow, my soul still
Participating immortality with it
But here's the misery of earth's limited glory,
There's not a way reveal'd to any honour
Above the fame¹ which your own merits give you

Heng Indeed, my lord, we hold, when ali's summ'd
up

That can be made for worth to be express'd,
The fame that a man wins himself is best,
That he may call his own Honours put to him 20
Make him no more a man than his clothes do,
And are as soon ta'en off, for in the warmth
The heat comes from the body, not the weeds
So man's true fame must strike from his own deeds
And since by this event which fortune speaks us,
This land appears the fair predestin'd soil
Ordain'd for our good hap, we crave, my lord,
A little earth to thrive on, what you please,
Where we'll but keep a nursery of good spirits
To fight for you and yours

Vort Sir, for our treasure, 30
'Tis open to your merits, as our love,

¹ Old ed "same"

But for ye're strangers in religion chiefly—
Which is the greatest alienation can be,
And breeds most factions in the bloods of men—
I must not yield to that

Enter SIMON with a hide

Heng 'S precious, my lord,
I see a pattern, be it but so little
As yon poor hide will compass

Vort How, the hide !

Heng Rather than nothing, sir

Vort Since you're so reasonable,
Take so much in the best part of our kingdom

Heng We thank your grace

[*Exit VORTIGER with Gentlemen*

Rivers from bubbling springs 40

Have rise at first, and great from abject things.

Stay yonder fellow he came luckily,

And he shall fare well for't, whate'er he be ;

We'll thank our fortune in rewarding him

Hor. Stay, fellow !

Sim How, fellow ? 'tis more than you know, whether
I be your fellow or no, I am sure you see me not

Heng Come, what's the price of your hide ? 48

Sim O unreasonable villain ! he would buy the house
over a man's head I'll be sure now to make my
bargain wisely, they may buy me out of my skin else.
[*Aside*]—Whose hide would you buy, mine or the
beast's ? There is little difference in their complexions :
I think mine is the blacker of the two you shall see for

your love, and buy for your money.—A pestilence on you all, how have you deceived me ! you buy an ox-hide ! you buy a calf's gather ! They are all hungry soldiers, and I took them for honest shoemakers. [Aside

Heng. Hold, fellow, prithee, hold,—right a fool worldling

That kicks at all good fortune,—whose man art thou? 60

Sim. I am a servant, yet a masterless man, sir

Heng. Prithee, how can that be ?

Sim. Very nimbly, sir, my master is dead, and now I serve my mistress, ergo, I am a masterless man she is now a widow, and I am the foreman of her tan-pit

Heng. Hold you, and thank your fortune, not your wit [Gives him money 67

Sim. Faith, and I thank your bounty, and not your wisdom, you are not troubled with wit neither greatly, it seems Now, by this light, a nest of yellow-hammers ! What will become of me ? if I can keep all these without hanging myself, I am happier than a hundred of my neighbours You shall have my skin into the bargain, then if I chance to die like a dog, the labour will be saved of flaying me I'll undertake, sir, you shall have all the skins in our parish at this price, men's and women's

Heng. Sirrah, give good ear to me now take the hide

And cut it all into the slenderest thongs

That can bear strength to hold.

80

Sim That were a jest, i'faith spoil all the leather?
sin and pity! why, 'twould shoe half your army

Heng Do it, I bid you

Sim What, cut it all in thongs? Hum, this is like the
vanity of your Roman gallants, that cannot wear good
suits, but they must have them cut and slashed in
giggets,¹ that the very crimson taffaties sit blushing at
their follies I would I might persuade you from this
humour of cutting, ² 'tis but a swaggering condition, and
nothing profitable what if it were but well pinked?
'twould last longer for a summer suit. 91

Heng What a cross lump of ignorance have I lighted
on!

I must be forc'd to beat my drift into him — [*Aside.*
Look you, to make you wiser than your parents,
I have so much ground given me as this hide
Will compass, which, as it [now] is, is nothing

Sim Nothing, quotha?

Why, 'twill not keep a hog

Heng Now with the 'vantage

Cut into several pieces, 'twill stretch far,

And make a liberal circuit. 100

Sim A shame on your crafty hide! is this your
cunning? I have learnt more knavery now than ever I
shall claw off while I live I'll go purchase land by

¹ "Gigget" is a provincial term for a leg-of-mutton bone see
Evans' *Leicester Words* in the English Dialect Society's publications
(1881) Here "giggets" would seem to refer to the stripes or "panes"
in the hose

² "Cutter" was a cant term for a bully or sharper

cow-tails, and undo the parish , three good bulls' pizzles would set up a man for ever this is like a pin a-day to set up a haberdasher of small wares.

Heng Thus men that mean to thrive, as we, must learn

Set in a foot at first

Sim A foot do you call it ? The devil is in that foot that takes up all this leather 110

Heng Despatch, and cut it carefully with all The advantage, sirrah.

Sim You could never have lighted upon such a fellow to serve your turn, captain I have such a trick of stretching, too ! I learned it of a tanner's man that was hanged last sessions at Maidstone I'll warrant you, I'll get you a mile and a half more than you're aware of

Heng Pray, serve me so as oft as you will, sir

Sim I am casting about for nine acres to make a garden-plot out of one of the buttocks 120

Heng 'Twill be a good soil for nosegays

Sim 'Twill be a good soil for cabbages, to stuff out the guts of your followers there

Heng Go, see it carefully perform'd .

[*Exit SIMON with Soldiers*]

It is the first foundation of our fortunes

On Britain's earth, and ought to be embrac'd

With a respect near link'd to adoration.

Methinks it sounds to me a fair assurance

Of large honours and hopes , does it not, captain ?

Hor How many have begun with less at first, 130
That have had emperors from their bodies sprung,

And left their carcasses as much in monument
As would erect a college !

Heng There's the fruits
Of their religious show too , to lie rotting
Under a million spent in gold and marble

Hor But where shall we make choice of our ground,
captain ?

Heng About the fruitful flanks of uberous Kent,
A fat and olive soil , there we came in
O captain, he has given he knows not what !

Hor. Long may he give so ! 140

Heng I tell thee, sirrah, he that begg'd a field
Of fourscore acres for a garden-plot,
'Twas pretty well , but he came short of this

Hor. Send over for more Saxons

Heng With all speed, captain

Hor Especially for Roxena

Heng Who, my daughter ?

Hor That star of Germany, forget not her, sir
She is a fair fortunate maid —

Fair she is, and fortunate may she be ,
But in maid lost for ever My desire

Has been the close confusion of that name 150
A treasure 'tis, able to make more thieves

Than cabinets set open to entice ,
Which learn them theft that never knew the vice

[*Aside*

Heng Come, I'll despatch with speed

Hor Do, forget none

Heng Marry, pray help my memory

Hor Roxena, you remember ?

Heng What more, dear sir ?

Hor I see your memory's clear, sir

[*Shouts within*

Heng Those shouts leap'd from our army

Hor They were too cheerful

To voice a bad event

Enter a Gentleman

Heng Now, sir, your news ?

Gent Roxena the fair——

Heng True, she shall be sent for

Gent She's here, sir

Heng What say'st ?

Gent She's come, sir

Hor A new youth

160

Begins me o'er again

[*Aside*

Gent Follow'd you close, sir,

With such a zeal as daughter never equall'd ,

Expos'd herself to all the merciless dangers

Set in mankind or fortune , not regarding

Aught but your sight

Heng. Her love is infinite to me

Hor Most charitably censur'd , 'tis her cunning,

The love of her own lust, which makes a woman

Gallop down hill as fearless as a drunkard

There's no true loadstone in the world but that ,

It draws them through all storms by sea or shame 170

Life's loss is thought too small to pay that game

[*Aside*

Gent What follows more of her will take you¹ strongly

Heng How¹

Gent Nay, 'tis worth your wonder

Her heart, joy-ravished with your late success,
 Being the early morning of your fortunes,
 So prosperously new opening at her coming,
 She takes a cup of gold, and, midst the army,
 Teaching her knee a reverend cheerfulness,
 Which well became her, drank a liberal health 180
 To the king's joys and yours, the king in presence,
 Who with her sight, but her behaviour chiefly,
 Or chief but one or both, I know not which,—
 But he's so far 'bove my expression caught,
 'Twere art enough for one man's time and portion
 To speak him and miss nothing

Heng This is astonishing¹

Hor O, this ends bitter now¹ our close-hid flame
 Will break out of my heart, I cannot keep it [*Aside*

Heng Gave you attention, captain? how now, man?

Hor A kind of grief 'bout² these times of the moon
 still 190

I feel a pain like a convulsion,
 A cramp at heart, I know not what name fits it

Heng Nor never seek one for it, let it go
 Without a name, would all griefs were serv'd so¹

¹ Old ed "you take

² Old ed ' about

Flourish *Re-enter VORTIGER, with ROXENA and Attendants*

Hor A love-knot already? arm in arm ! [*Aside*

Vort What's he

Lays claim to her?

Heng In right of father-hood

I challenge an obedient part

Vort Take it,

And send [me] back the rest

Heng What means your grace?

Vort You'll keep no more than what belongs to you?

Heng That's all, my lord, it all belongs to me, 200

I keep the husband's interest till he come

Yet out of duty and respect to majesty,

I send her back your servant

Vort My mistress, sir, or nothing

Heng Come again,

I never thought to hear so ill of thee

Vort How, sir, so ill?

Heng So beyond detestable

To be an honest vassal is some calling,

Poor is the worst of that, shame comes not to't,

But mistress, that['s] the only common bait

Fortune sets at all hours, catching whore with it, 210

And plucks them up by clusters There's my sword, my

lord, [*Offering his sword to VORTIGER*

And if your strong desires aim at my blood,

Which runs too purely there, a nobler way

Quench it in mine

Vort I ne'er took sword in vain
Hengist, we here create thee earl of Kent.

Hor O, that will do't ! *[Aside, and falls]*

Vort What ails our friend ? look to him

Rox O, 'tis his epilepsy, I know it well.

I help'd him once in Germany, comes it again ?

A virgin's right hand strok'd upon his heart

Gives him ease straight, but it must be a pure virgin, 220

Or else it brings no comfort

Vort What a task

She puts upon herself, unurg'd purity !

The truth of this will bring love's rage into me

Rox O, this would mad a woman ! there's no proof
In love to indiscretion

Hor Pish ! this cures not

Rox Dost think I'll ever wrong thee ?

Hor O, most feelingly !

But I'll prevent it now, and break thy neck

With thy own cunning Thou hast undertaken

To give me help, to bring in royal credit

Thy crack'd virginity, but I'll spoil all

230

I will not stand on purpose, though I could,

But fall still to disgrace thee

Rox What, you will not ?

Hor I have no other way to help myself,

For when thou'rt known to be a whore imposterous,

I shall be sure to keep thee

Rox O sir, shame me not !

You've had what is most precious, try my faith,

Undo me not at first in chaste opinion

Hor All this art shall not make me feel my legs.

Rox. I prithee, do not wilfully confound me

Hor. Well, I'm content for this time to recover, 240
To save thy credit, and bite in my pain,
But if thou ever fail'st me, I will fall,
And thou shalt never get me up again [Rises

Rox Agreed 'twixt you and I, sir — See, my lord,
A poor maid's work ' the man may pass for health now
Among the clearest bloods, and those are nicest.

Vort I've heard of women brought men on their
knees,

But few that e'er restored them — How now, captain?

Hor My lord, methinks I could do things past man,
I'm so renew'd in vigour, I long most 250
For violent exercise to take me down

My joy's so high in blood, I'm above frailty

Vort My lord of Kent

Heng Your love's unworthy creature

Vort See'st thou this fair chain? think upon the
means

To keep it link'd for ever

Heng O my lord,

'Tis many degrees sunder'd from my hope '

Besides, your grace has a young virtuous queen

Vort I say, think on it

Hor If this wind hold, I fall to my old disease

[Aside

Vort There's no fault in thee but to come so late, 260
All else is excellent I chide none but fate [Exeunt.

ACT III

SCENE I

A Room in the Palace

Enter HORSUS and ROXENA

Rox I've no conceit now that you ever lov'd me,
But as lust led you for the time

Hor See, see !

Rox Do you pine at my advancement, sir ?

Hor O barrenness

Of understanding ! what a right love's this !

'Tis you that fall, I that am reprehended

What height of honours, eminence of fortune,
Should ravish me from you ?

Rox Who can tell that, sir ?

What's he can judge of a man's appetite

Before he sees him eat ?

Who knows the strength of any's constancy

That never yet was tempted ? We can call

Nothing our own, if they be deeds to come ,

They're only ours when they are pass'd and done

How blest are you above your apprehension,

If your desire would lend you so much patience,
T' examine the adventurous condition
Of our affections, which are full of hazard,
And draw in the time's goodness to defend us ¹
First, this bold course of ours cannot last long,
Nor ever does in any without shame, 20
And that, you know, brings danger, and the greater
My father is in blood, as he's well risen,
The greater will the storm of his rage be
'Gainst his blood's wronging I have cast ¹ for this
'Tis not advancement that I love alone,
'Tis love of shelter, to keep shame unknown

Hor O, were I sure of thee, as 'tis impossible
There to be ever sure where there's no hold,
Your pregnant hopes should not be long in rising ¹

Rox By what assurance have you held me thus far, 30
Which you found firm, despair you not in that

Hor True, that was good security for the time,
But in a change of state, when you're advanc'd,
You women have a French toy in your pride,
You make your friend come crouching, or perhaps,
To bow in th' hams the better, he is put
To compliment three hours with your chief woman,
Then perhaps not admitted, no, nor ever,
That's the more noble fashion Forgetfulness
Is the most pleasing virtue they can have, 40
That do spring up from nothing, for by the same

Forgetting all, they forget whence they came,
An excellent property of oblivion

Rox I pity all the fortunes of poor women
In my own unhappiness. When we have given
All that we have to men, what's our requital?
An ill-fac'd jealousy, that resembles much
The mistrustfulness of an insatiate thief,
That scarce believes he has all, though he has stripp'd
The true man¹ naked, and left nothing on him 50
But the hard cord that binds him so are we
First robb'd, and then left bound by jealousy
Take reason's advice, and you'll find it impossible
For you to lose me in this king's advancement,
Who's an usurper here, and as the kingdom,
So shall he have my love by usurpation,
The right shall be in thee still My ascension
To dignity is but to waft thee higher,
And all usurpers have the falling-sickness,
They cannot keep up long

Hor May credulous man 60
Put all his confidence in so weak a bottom,
And make a saving voyage?

Rox Nay, as gainful
As ever man yet made

Hor Go, take thy fortunes,
Aspire with my consent,
So thy ambition will be sure to prosper,

¹ i.e. honest man Cf. *Love's Labour Lost*, iv 3 — "A true man or a thief that gallops thus"

Speak the fair certainties of Britain's queen
Home to thy wishes.

Rox Speak in hope I may,
But not in certainty

Hor I say in both
Hope, and be sure I'll soon remove the let ¹
That stands between thee and ² glory

Rox Life of love ! 70

If lost virginity can win such a day,
I'll have no daughter but shall learn my way [*Exit*

Hor 'Twill be good work for him that first instructs
them :

May be some son[s] of mine, got by this woman too,
May match with their own sisters Peace, 'tis he

Enter VORTIGER

Invention, fail me not 'tis a gallant credit
To marry one's whore bravely [*Aside*

Vort Have I power
Of life and death, and cannot command ease
In my own blood ? After I was a king,
I thought I never should have felt pain more , 80
That there had been a ceasing of all passions
And common stings, which subjects use to feel,
That were created with a patience fit
For all extremities But such as we
Know not the way to suffer , then to do it,
How most preposterous 'tis ! Tush, riddles, riddles !

¹ Obstacle

² Old ed "and thy "

I'll break through custom Why should not the mind,
The nobler part that's of us, be allow'd
Change of affections, as our bodies are
Change of food and raiment? I'll have it so 90
All fashions appear strange at first production ,
But this would be well follow'd —O, captain !

Hor My lord, I grieve for you , I scarce fetch breath,
But a sigh hangs at the end of it but this
Is not the way, if you'd give way to counsel

Vort Set me right, then, or I shall heavily curse thee
For lifting up my understanding to me,
'To show that I was wrong Ignorance is safe ,
I then slept happily if knowledge mend me not,
Thou hast committed a most cruel sin, 100
To wake me into judgment, and then leave me

Hor I will not leave you, sir , that were rudely
done

First, you've a flame too open and too violent,
Which, like blood-guiltiness in an offender,
Betrays him when nought else can Out with't, sir ,
Or let some cunning coverture be made
Before your practice¹ enters 'twill spoil all else

Vort Why, look you, sir , I can be as calm as silence
All the while music plays Strike on, sweet friend,
As mild and merry as the heart of innocence , 110
I prithee, take my temper Has a virgin
A heat more modest ?

Hor He does well to ask me ,

¹ Plot, scheme

I could have **told** him once. [*Aside.*—Why, here's a government ¹

There's not a sweeter amity in friendship
Than in this league 'twixt you and health.

Vort Then since

Thou find'st me capable of happiness,
Instruct me with the practice

Hor What will you say, my lord,
If I ensnare her in an act ¹ of lust ?

Vort ² O, there were art to the life ¹ but 'tis impossible ,
I pnthee, flatter me no further with it 120

Fie ¹ so much sin as goes to make up that,
Will ne'er prevail with her Why, I'll tell you, sir,
She's so sin-killing modest, that if only
To move the question were enough adultery
To cause a separation, there's no gallant
So brassy-impudent durst undertake
The words that shall belong to't.

Hor Say you so, sir ?
There's nothing made in the world but has a way to't ,
Though some be harder than the rest to find,
Yet one there is, that's certain , and I think 130
I've took the course to light on't

Vort O, I pray for't ¹

Hor I heard you lately say (from whence, my lord,
My practice receiv'd life first), that your queen
Still consecrates her time to contemplation,
Takes solitary walks

¹ Old ed "action "

² In the old ed this speech is given to Horsus

Vort Nay, late and early
 Commands her weak guard from her, which are but
 Women at strongest

Hor I like all this, my lord
 And now, sir, you shall know what net is us'd
 In many places to catch modest women,
 Such as will never yield by prayers or gifts. 140
 Now there be some will catch up men as fast,
 But those she-fowlers nothing concern us,
 Their birding is at windows, ours abroad,
 Where ring-doves should be caught, that's married wives,
 Or chaste maids, what the appetite has a mind to

Vort Make no pause then

Hor. The honest gentlewoman,
 When nothing will prevail—I pity her now—
 Poor soul, she's entic'd forth by her own sex
 To be betray'd to man, who in some garden-house¹
 Or remote walk, taking his lustful time, 150
 Binds darkness on her eyelids, surprises her,
 And having a coach ready, turns her in,
 Hurrying her where he list for the sins safety,
 Making a rape of honour without words,
 And at the low ebb of his lust, perhaps
 Some three days after, sends her coach'd again
 To the same place, and, which would make most
 mad,

¹ i. e. summer-house In the suburbs of London were many gardens
 ("either paled or walled round about very high, with their arbours and
 bowers) where wantons took their pleasure

She's robb'd of all, yet knows not where she's robb'd,
There's the dear precious mischief!

Vort Is this practis'd?

Hor Too much, my lord, to be so little known, 160
A springe to catch a maidenhead after sunset,
Clip it, and send it home again to the city,
There 'twill ne'er be perceiv'd

Vort My raptures want expression, I conceit¹
Enough to make me fortunate, and thee great

Hor I praise it then, my lord—I knew 'twould take
[*Aside*] [Exeunt]

SCENE II

Grounds near the Palace

Enter CASTIZA with a book, and two Ladies

Cast Methinks you live strange lives, when I see it
not,

It grieves me less, you know how to ease me then
If you but knew how well I lov'd your absence,
You would bestow't upon me without asking

First Lady Faith, for my part, were it no more for
ceremony than for love, you should walk long enough
without my attendance, and so think all my fellows,
though they say nothing Books in women's hands are
as much against the hair,² methinks, as to see men
wear stomachers, or night-rails.³—She that has the green-

¹ Conceive

² Equivalent to our modern expression "against the grain"

³ Night-gowns

sickness, and should follow her counsel, would die like an ass, and go to the worms like a salad, not I so long as such a creature as man is made, she is a fool that knows not what he is good for [Exeunt Ladies. 14

Cast Though among life's elections, that of virgin I did speak noblest of, yet it has pleas'd the king To send me a contented blessedness In that of marriage, which I ever doubted

Enter VORTIGER and HORSUS disguised

I see the king's affection was a true one,
It lasts and holds out long, that's no mean virtue 20
In a commanding man, though in great fear
At first I was enforc'd to venture on it

Vort All's happy, clear, and safe

Hor The rest comes gently on

Vort Be sure you seize on her full sight at first,
For fear of my discovery

Hor Now, fortune, and I am sped

[Seizes and blindfolds CASTIZA]

Cast Treason! treason!

Hor Sirrah, how stand you? prevent noise and clamour,

Or death shall end thy service

Vort A sure cunning [Aside 30

Cast O, rescue! rescue!

Hor Dead her voice! away, make speed!

Cast No help? no succour?

Hor Louder yet, extend

Your voice to the last rack , you shall have leave now,
You're far from any pity

Cast What's my sin ?

Hor Contempt of man , and he's a noble creature,
And takes it in ill part to be despis'd

Cast. I never despis'd any

Hor No ? you hold us

Unworthy to be lov'd , what call you that ?

Cast I have a lord disproves you

Hor Pish ! your lord ?

40

You're bound to love your lord, that's no thanks to you
You should love those you are not tied to love,
'That's the right trial of a woman's charity

Cast I know not what you are, nor what my fault is
If it be life you seek, whate'er you be,
Use no immodest words, and take it from me ,
You kill me more in talking sinfully
Than acting cruelty be so far pitiful,
To end me without words

Hor Long may you live !

'Tis the wish of a good subject 'tis not life

50

That I thirst after , loyalty forbid

I should commit such treason you mistake me,
I've no such bloody thought , only your love
Shall content me

Cast What said you, sir ?

Hor Thus plainly,

To strip my words as naked as my purpose,

I must and will enjoy thee [*She faints*]—Gone
already ?

Look to her, bear her up, she goes apace ,
I fear'd this still, and therefore came provided
There's that will fetch life from a dying spark,
And make it spread a furnace , she's well straight. 60

[Pours drops from a vial into CASTIZA'S mouth]

Pish, let her go , she stands, upon my knowledge,
Or else she counterfeits , I know the virtue

Cast Never did sorrows in afflicted woman
Meet with such cruelties, such hard-hearted ways
Human invention never found before
To call back life to live, is but ill taken
By some departing soul[s], then to force mine back
To an eternal act of death in lust,
What is it but most execrable ?

Hor So, so

But this is from my business List to me 70
Here you are now far from all hope of friendship,
Save what you make in me , 'scape me you cannot,
Send your soul that assurance , that resolv'd on,
You know not who I am, nor ever shall,
I need not fear you then , but give consent,
Then with the faithfulness of a true friend
I'll open myself to you, fall your servant,
As I do now in hope, proud of submission,
And seal the deed up with eternal secrecy ,
Not death shall pluck't from me, much less the king's
Authority or torture

Vort I admire him *[Aside 81]*

Cast O sir ! whate'er you are, I teach my knee
Thus to requite you, be content to take *[Kneels]*

Only my sight, as ransom for my honour,
And where you have but mock'd my eyes with darkness,
Pluck them quite out, all outward lights of body
I'll spare most willingly, but take not from me
That which must guide me to another world,
And leave me dark for ever, fast without
That cursed pleasure, which will make two souls 90
Endure a famine everlastingly

Hor This almost moves [*Aside*

Vort By this light he'll be taken [*Aside*

Hor I'll wrestle down all pity [*Aside*]—What ¹ will
you consent ?

Cast I'll never be so guilty

Hor Farewell words then ¹

You hear no more of me, but thus I seize you

Cast O, if a power above be reverenc'd by thee,
I bind thee by that name, by manhood, nobleness,
And all the charms of honour ¹

[*VORTIGER snatches her up, and carries her off*

Hor Ah, ha ¹ here's one caught

For an example never was poor lady
So mock'd into false terror, with what anguish 100
She lies with her own lord ¹ now she could curse
All into barrenness, and beguile herself by't
Conceit's a powerful thing, and is indeed
Plac'd as a palate to taste grief or love,
And as that relishes, so we approve,
Hence comes it that our taste is so beguil'd,
Changing pure blood for some that's mix'd and soil'd

[*Exit*

SCENE III

*A Chamber in a Castle near Queenborough**Enter HENGIST*

Hen A fair and fortunate constellation reign'd
When we set foot here, for from his first gift
(Which to a king's unbounded eyes seem'd nothing),
The compass of a hide, I have erected
A strong and spacious castle, yet contain'd myself
Within my limits, without check or censure
Thither, with all th' observance of a subject,
The liveliest witness of a grateful mind,
I purpose to invite him and his queen,
And feast them nobly

Barber [*speaking without*] We will enter, sir, 10
Tis a state business, of a twelve-month long,
The choosing of a mayor

Hen What noise is that?

Tailor [*without*] Sir, we must speak with the good
earl of Kent

Though we were ne'er brought up to keep a door,
We are as honest, sir, as some that do

Enter a Gentleman

Hen Now, sir, what's the occasion of their clamours?

Gent Please you, my lord a company of townsmen
Are bent, 'gainst all denials and resistance,
To have speech with your lordship, and that you
Must end a difference, which none else can do 20

Hen Why then there's reason in their violence,
Which I ne'er looked for first let in but one,
And as we relish him, the rest come on

[*Exit Gentleman*

'Tis no safe wisdom in a rising man
To slight off such as these, nay, rather these
Are the foundations of a lofty work,
We cannot build without them, and stand sure
He that ascends first¹ to a mountain's top
Must begin at the foot

Re-enter Gentleman

Now, sir, who comes?

Gent They cannot yet agree, my lord, of that 30
They say 'tis worse now than it was before,
For where the difference was but between two,
Upon this coming first they're all at odds
One says, he shall lose his place in the church by't,
Another will not do his wife that wrong,
And by their good wills they would all come first.
The strife continues in most heat, my lord,
Between a country barber and a tailor
Of the same town, and which your lordship names,
'Tis yielded by consent that he shall enter 40

Heng Here's no² sweet coil! I'm glad they are so
reasonable

¹ Old ed. "first ascends"

² "No" is frequently used in an ironical sense by the old dramatists to denote a great deal of a thing

Call in the barber [*Exit Gentleman*], if the tale be long,
He'll cut it short, I trust, that's all the hope

Re-enter Gentleman with Barber

Now, sir, are you the barber?

Barb O, most barbarous ! a corrector of enormities in hair, my lord ; a promoter of upper lips, or what your lordship, in the neatness of your discretion, shall think fit to call me

Heng Very good, I see you have this without book, but what's your business? 50

Barb Your lordship comes to a very high point indeed the business, sir, lies about the head

Heng That's work for you

Barb No, my good lord, there is a corporation, a body, a kind of body

Heng The barber is out at the body, let in the tailor [*Exit Gentleman*]

This 'tis to reach beyond your own profession,
When you let go your head, you lose your memory
You have no business with the body

Barb Yes, sir, I am a barber chirurgion, I have had something to do with it in my time, my lord, and I was never so out of the body as I have been of late send me good luck, I'll marry some whore but I'll get in again 64

Re-enter Gentleman with Tailor

Heng Now, sir, a good discovery come from you !

Tail I will rip up the linings to your lordship,
And show what stuff 'tis made of for the body
Or corporation—

Heng. There the barber left indeed

Tail 'Tis piec'd up of two fashions 70

Heng A patch'd town the whilest.

Tail Nor can we go through stitch, my noble lord,
The choler is so great in the one party
And as in linsey-woolsey wove together,
One piece makes several suits, so, upright earl,
Our linsey-woolsey hearts make all this coil.

Heng What's all this now? I'm ne'er the wiser yet —
Call in the rest

[*Exit Gentleman, and re-enter with Glover
and others*

Now, sirs,—what are you?

Glov Sir-reverence¹ on your lordship, I am a glover

Heng What needs that then? 80

Glov Sometimes I deal in dog's leather, sir-reverence
the while

Heng Well, to the purpose, if there be any towards²

Glov I were an ass else, saving your lordship's pre-
sence

We have a body, but our town wants a hand,
A hand of justice, a worshipful master mayor

Heng This is well handled yet, a man may take some
hold on it — You want a mayor?

Glov Right, but there's two at fisty-cuffs about it.

¹ A corruption of "save reverence"

² To hand.

Sir, as I may say, at daggers drawing,— 90
But that I cannot say, because they have none,—
And you being earl of Kent, our town does say,
Your lordship's voice shall part and end the fray

Heng This is strange work for me Well, sir, what
be they?

Glov The one is a tanner

Heng Fie, I shall be too partial,
I owe too much affection to that trade
To put it to my voice What is his name?

Glov Simon

Heng How, Simon too?

Glov Nay, 'tis but Simon one, sir, the very same
Simon that sold your lordship a hide 101

Heng What sayest thou?

Glov That's all his glory, sir he got his master's
widow by it presently, a rich tanner's wife she has set
him up, he was her foreman a long time in her other
husband's days

Heng Now let me perish in my first aspiring,
If the pretty simplicity of his fortune
Do not most highly take me 'tis a presage, methinks,
Of bright succeeding happiness to mine, 110
When my fate's glow-worm casts forth such a shine —
And what are those that do contend with him?

Tail Marry, my noble lord, a fustian-weaver

Heng How! he offer to compare with Simon? he a
fit match for him!

Barb Hark, hark, my lord! here they come both in
a pelting chafe from the town-house

Enter SIMON and OLIVER

Sim How, before me? I scorn thee,
Thou wattle-fac'd sing'd pig

Olv. Pig? I defy thee,
My uncle was a Jew, and scorn'd the motion ¹ 120

Sim I list not brook thy vaunts Compare with me,
Thou spindle of concupiscence? 'tis well known
Thy first wife was a flax-wench

Olv But such a flax-wench
Would I might never want at my need,
Nor any friend of mine my neighbours knew her
Thy wife was but a hempen halter to her

Sim Use better words, I'll hang thee in my year
else,
Let who will choose thee afterwards

Glov Peace, for shame,
Quench your great spirit do not you see his lordship?

Heng What, master Simonides? 130

Sim Simonides? what a fair name hath he made of
Simon ¹² then he's an ass that calls me Simon again, I
am quite out of love with it

¹ "Here S. P. an annotator in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, wishes unnecessarily to read 'mention' Middleton has the same expression else where and so in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge*, act iv sc 3 —

³ *Cit* You had best
Go peach, do peach!

² *Cit* Peach? *I scorn the motion* —Dyce

³ Lucian in his *Somnium* (14) has a story about a man named Simon, who, from squalid poverty was suddenly advanced to opulence. A quondam acquaintance, meeting him, addressed him Χαῖρε ὁ Σίμων

Heng Give me thy hand, I love thy fortunes, and like a man that thrives

Sim I took a widow, my lord, to be the best piece of ground to thrive on, and by my faith, my lord, there's a young Simonides, like a green onion, peeping up already

Heng Thou'st a good lucky hand

Sim I have somewhat, sir 140

Heng But why to me is this election offer'd?
The choosing of a mayor goes by most voices

Sim True, sir, but most of our townsmen are so hoarse with drinking, there's not a good voice among them all

Heng Are you content to put it to all these then?
To whom I liberally resign my interest,
To prevent censures

Sim I speak first, my lord

Olv Though I speak last, my lord, I am not least if they will cast away a town-born child, they may, it is but dying some forty years before my time 150

Heng I leave you to your choice a while

All Your good lordship

[*Exeunt HENGIST and Gentleman*]

Sim Look you, neighbours, before you be too hasty
Let Oliver the fustian-weaver stand as fair as I do, and the devil do him good on't

Olv I do, thou upstart callymoocher,¹ I do, 'tis well

whereupon the upstart, turning in anger to his retainers, said—*Εἶπατε τῷ πτωχῷ τούτῳ μὴ κατασμικρύνειν μου τοῦτομα οὐ γὰρ Σίμων ἀλλὰ Σιμωνίδης ὀνομάζομαι* Doubtless Middleton had this passage in his mind

¹ "A term of reproach It is probably connected with *micher* — *Halkwell*

known to the parish I have been twice ale-conner,¹ thou mushroom, that shot'st up in a night, by lying with thy mistress¹

Sim Faith, thou art such a spiny baldrib, all the mistresses in the town will never get thee up 161

Olw I scorn to rise by a woman, as thou didst my wife shall rise by me

Glov I pray leave your communication, we can do nothing else

Olw. I gave that barber a fustian-suit, and twice redeemed his cittern² he may remember me

Sim I fear no false measure but in that tailor; the glover and the button-maker are both cock-sure, that collier's eye I like not, now they consult, the matter is in brewing poor Gill, my wife, lies longing for the news, 'twill make her a glad mother 172

All [except OL] A Simon, a Simon¹

Sim Good people, I thank you all

Olw Wretch that I am¹ Tanner, thou hast curried favour

Sim I curry¹ I defy thy fustian fume

¹ An officer appointed to detect adulteration in bread, beer and ale, to destroy false weights and measures, unwholesome provisions, &c

² "A lute or *cittern* formerly used to be part of the furniture of a barber's shop, and, as Sir John Hawkins, in his notes on Walton's *Complete Angler*, p. 236, observes, answered the end of a newspaper the now common amusement of waiting customers. In an old book of enigmas, to every one of which the author has prefixed a wooden cut of the subject of the enigma, is a barber, and the cut represents a barber's shop, in which there is one person sitting in a chair under the barber's hands, while another, who is waiting for his turn, is playing on the lute and on the side of the shop hangs another instrument of the lute or *cittern* kind"—*Reed*

Olv But I will prove a rebel all thy year,
And raise up the seven deadly sins against thee [*Exit* 179]

Sim The deadly sins will scorn to rise by thee, if they have any breeding, as commonly they are well brought up 'tis not for every scab to be acquainted with them but leaving the scab, to you, good neighbours, now I bend my speech First, to say more than a man can say, I hold it not fit to be spoken but to say what a man ought to say, there I leave you also I must confess your loves have chosen a weak and unlearned man, that I can neither write nor read, you all can witness, yet not altogether so unlearned, but I can set my mark to a bond, if I would be so simple, an excellent token of government Cheer you then, my hearts, you have done you know not what there's a full point, there you must all cough and hem [*Here they all cough and hem*] Now touching our common adversary the fustian-weaver, who threatens he will raise the deadly sins among us, let them come, our town is big enough to hold them, we will not so much disgrace it, besides, you know a deadly sin will lie in a narrow hole but when they think themselves safest, and the web of their iniquity best woven, with the horse-strength of my justice I will break through the loom of their concupiscence, and make the weaver go seek his shuttle here you may cough and hem again, if you'll do me the favour [*They cough and hem again*] Why, I thank you all, and it shall not go unrewarded Now for the deadly sins, pride, sloth, envy, wrath, as for covetousness and gluttony, I'll tell you more when I come out of my office, I shall have time to try what they are I will

prove them soundly , and if I find gluttony and covetousness to be directly sins, I'll bury the one in the bottom of a chest, and the other in the end of my garden But, sirs, for lechery, I'll tickle that home myself, I'll not leave a whore in the town 212

Barb Some of your neighbours must seek their wives in the country then

Sim Barber, be silent, I will cut thy comb else To conclude, I will learn the villany of all trades , my own I know already if there be any knavery in the baker, I will bolt it out , if in the brewer, I will taste him thoroughly, and piss out his iniquity at his own suckhole in a word, I will knock down all enormities like a butcher, and send the hide to my fellow-tanners 221

All A Simonides, a true Simonides indeed !

Re-enter HENGIST with ROXENA

Heng How now ? how goes your choice ?

Tail This is he, my lord

Sim To prove I am the man, I am bold to take The upper hand of your lordship I'll not lose An inch of my honour

Heng Hold, sirs there's some few crowns To mend your feast, because I like your choice

Barb Joy bless you, sir ! 230

We'll drink your health with trumpets

Sim I with sackbuts,¹

That's the more solemn drinking for my state

¹ (1) Butts of sack , (2) bass trumpets.

No malt this year shall fume into my pate

[*Exeunt all but HENGIST and ROXENA* ¹

Heng Continue[s] still that favour in his love?

Rox Nay, with increase, my lord, the flame grows
greater,

Though he has learn'd a better art of late

To set a screen before it

Heng Speak lower

[*Retires to a seat and reads* *exit* ROXENA

Enter VORTIGER and HORSUS

Hor Heard every word, my lord

Vort Plainly?

Hor Distinctly

The course I took was dangerous, but not failing, 240

For I convey'd myself behind the hangings

Even just before his entrance

Vort 'Twas well ventur'd

Hor I had such a woman's first and second longing
in me

To hear¹ how she would bear her mock'd abuse

After she was return'd to privacy,

I could have fasted out an ember-week,

And never thought of hunger, to have heard her

Then came your holy Lupus and Germanus—

Vort Two holy confessors

Hor At whose first sight

¹ Old ed. "*Exit cum suis*"

² Old ed. "hear her"

SCENE III] *Mayor of Queenborough.* 65

I could perceive her fall upon her breast, 250
And cruelly afflict herself with sorrow,
(I never heard a sigh till I heard hers),
Who, after her confession, pitying her,
Put her into a way of patience,
Which now she holds, to keep it hid from you
There's all the pleasure that I took in't now ,
When I heard that, my pains was well remember'd
So, with applying comforts and relief,
They've brought it lower, to an easy grief ,
But yet the taste is not quite gone.

Vort Still fortune 260

Sits bettering our inventions.

Hor Here she comes

Enter CASTIZA

Cast Yonder's my lord , O, I'll return again ' .
Methinks I should not dare to look on him

[Aside, and exit

Hor She's gone again

Vort It works the kindlier, sir
Go now and call her back *[Exit HORSUS]* She winds
herself

Into the snare so prettily, 'tis a pleasure
To set toils for her

Re-enter CASTIZA and HORSUS

Cast He may read my shame
Now in my blush

[Aside
L

Vort Come, you're so link'd to holiness,
So taken with contemplative desires,
That the world has you, yet enjoys you not 270
You have been weeping too

Cast Not I, my lord

Vort Trust me, I fear you have you're much to
blame

To yield so much to passion without cause
Is not some time enough for meditation?
Must it lay title to your health and beauty,
And draw them into time's consumption too?
'Tis too exacting for a holy faculty —
My lord of Kent¹ — I prthee, wake him, captain.
He reads himself asleep, sure

Hor My lord¹

Vort Nay,

I'll take away your book, and bestow't here 280
[*Takes book from HENGIST*

Heng Your pardon, sir

Vort [*giving book to CASTIZA*] Lady, you that delight in
virgins' stories,

And all chaste works, here's excellent reading for you
Make of that book as made men do of favours,
Which they grow sick to part from — And now, my lord,
You that have so conceitedly¹ gone beyond me,
And made so large use of a slender gift,
Which we ne'er minded,² I commend your thrift,
And that your building may to all ages

¹ Ingeniously

² Intended

Carry the stamp and impress of your wit, 290
It shall be call'd Thong-Castle ¹

Heng How, my lord,
Thong-Castle ¹ there your grace quits me kindly

Vort 'Tis fit art should be known by its right name,
You that can spread my gift, I'll spread your fame

Heng I thank your grace for that

Vort And, lovèd lord,
So well do we accept your invitation,
With all speed we'll set forwards.

Heng Your honour loves me [Exit

¹ " See Lambard's Perambulation of Kent, 1596, p. 195. Jeffery of Monmouth's British History, B 6 C 11 '—*Reed*

ACT IV.

SCENE I

A Public Way near HENGIST's Castle

Enter SIMON and all his brethren, a mace and sword before him, meeting VORTIGER, CASTIZA, HENGIST, ROXENA, HORSUS, and two Ladies

Sim Lo,¹ I, the Mayor of Queenborough by name,
 With all my brethren, saving one that's lame,
 Are come as fast as fiery mill-horse gallops
 To greet thy grace, thy queen, and her fair trollops
 For reason of our coming do not look .
 It must be done, I find it i' the town-book ,
 And yet not I myself, I cannot ² read ,
 I keep a clerk to do those jobs for need
 And now expect a rare conceit before Thong-Castle see
 thee —
 Reach me the thing to give the king, the other too, I
 prithee —

10

¹ "In *Wit Restored*, 1658 (*Facetia*, &c vol 1 p 268 ed 1817), this speech of Simon is printed, with a few very slight variations, under the title of *A Prologue to the Mayor of Queenborough*" — *Dyce*

² *Wit Restored* gives the more spirited reading 'scorene to'

Now here they be, for queen and thee , the gift all steel
and leather,

But the conceit of mickle weight, and here they come
together

To show two loves must join in one, our town presents
by me

This gilded scabbard to the queen, this dagger unto thee
[*Offers the scabbard and dagger*

Vort Forbear your tedious and ridiculous duties ,
I hate them, as I do the riots ¹ of your
Inconstant rabble , I have felt your fits
Sheathe up your bounties with your iron wits

[*Exit with his train*

Sim Look, sirs, is his back turn'd ?

All It is, it is

Sim Then bless the good earl of Kent, say ! ! 20
I'll have this dagger turn'd into a pie,
And eaten up for anger, every bit on't
And when this pie shall be cut up by some rare cunning
pie-man,
They shall full lamentably sing, Put up thy dagger,
Simon

[*Excunt*

¹ Old ed "roots."

SCENE II

A Hall in HENGIST's Castle a feast set out.

Enter VORTIGER, HENGIST, HORSUS, DEVONSHIRE,
STAFFORD, CASTIZA, ROXENA, *two* Ladies, Guards,
and Attendants.

Heng A welcome, mighty lord, may appear costlier,
More full of toil and talk, show and conceit,
But one more stor'd with thankful love and truth
I forbid all the sons of men to boast of

Vort Why, here's ¹ a fabric that implies eternity,
The building plain, but most substantial,
Methinks it looks as if it mock'd all ruin,
Saving that master-piece of consummation,
The end of time, which must consume even ruin,
And eat that into cinders.

Heng There's no brass 10
Would pass your praise, my lord, 'twould last beyond it,
And shame our durablest metal

Vort Horsus

Hor My lord

Vort This is the time I've chosen, here's a full
meeting,

And here will I disgrace her

Hor 'Twill be sharp, my lord

Vort. O, 'twill be best

¹ Old ed "there's "

Hor. Why, here's the earl her father

Vort Ay, and the lord her uncle, that's the height
of't,

Invited both on purpose, to rise sick,
Full of shame's surfeit

Hor. And that's shrewd, byrlady
It ever sticks close to the ribs of honour,
Great men are never sound men after it, 20
It leaves some ache or other in their names still,
Which their posterity feels at every weather

Vort Mark but the least presentment of occasion,
As these times yield enough, and then mark me

Hor My observance is all yours, you know't, my
lord —

What careful ways some take to abuse themselves !
But as there be assurers of men's goods
'Gainst storms or pirates, which gives adventurers courage,
So such there must be to make up man's theft,
Or there would be no woman-venturer left
See, now they find their seats ! what a false knot
Of amity he ties about her arm,
Which rage must part ! In marriage 'tis no wonder,
Knots knit with kisses oft are broke with thunder
Music ? then I have done, I always learn [*Music*
To give my betters place

[*Aside, while the rest seat themselves*

Vort Where's captain Horsus ?

Sit, sit, we'll have a health anon to all
Good services

Hor They are poor in these days,

They'd rather have the cup¹ than the health
He hears me not, and most great men are deaf 40
On that side [Aside

Vort My lord of Kent, I thank you for this welcome,
It came unthought of, in the sweetest language
That ever my soul relish'd

Heng You are pleas'd, my lord,
To raise my happiness for slight deservings,
To show what power's in princes not in us
Aught worthy, 'tis in you that makes us thus
I'm chiefly sad, my lord, your queen's not merry

Vort So honour bless me, he has found the way
To my grief strangely Is there no delight—— 50

Cast My lord, I wish not any, nor is't needful,
I am as I was ever

Vort That's not so

Cast How? O, my fears ' [Aside

Vort When she writ maid, my lord,
You knew her otherwise

Devon To speak but truth,
I never knew her a great friend to mirth,
Nor taken much with any one delight,
Though there be many seemly and honourable
To give content to ladies without taxing

Vort My lord of Kent, this to thy full deserts,
Which intimates thy higher flow to honour [Drinking 60

Heng Which, like a river, shall return in service
To the great master-fountain

¹ Collier's correction for "carp" of the old ed

Vort Where's your lord?

I miss'd him not till now,—Lady, and yours?
No marvel then we were so out of the way
Of all pleasant discourse, they are the keys
Of human music, sure at their nativities
Great nature sign'd a general patent to them
To take up all the mirth in a whole kingdom
What's their employment now?

First Lady May it please your grace,
We never are so far acquainted with them , 70
Nothing we know but what they cannot keep ,
That's even the fashion of them all, my lord

Vort It seems ye've great thought in their constancies,
And they in yours, you dare so trust each other

Second Lady Hope well we do, my lord, we've reason
for it,

Because they say brown men are honestest,
But she's a fool will swear for any colour

Vort They would for yours

Second Lady Truth, 'tis a doubtful question,
And I'd be loath to put mine to't, my lord

Vort Faith, dare you swear for yourselves? that's a plain question 80

Second Lady My lord?

Vort You cannot deny that with honour,
And since 'tis urg'd, I'll put you to't in troth

First Lady May it please your grace—

Vort 'Twould please me very well,
And here's a book, mine never goes without one,

[Taking book from CASTIZA

She's an example to you all for purity
Come, swear (I've sworn you shall) that you ne'er
knew

The will of any man besides your husband's

Second Lady I'll swear, my lord, as far as my remem-
brance—

Vort How! your remembrance? that were strange

First Lady Your grace

Hearing our just excuse, will not say so 90

Vort Well, what's your just excuse? you're ne'er
without some

First Lady I'm often taken with a sleep, my lord,
The loudest thunder cannot waken me,
Not if a cannon's burthen be discharg'd
Close by my ear, the more may be my wrong,
There can be no infirmity, my lord,
More excusable in any woman

Second Lady And I'm so troubled with the mother
too,

I've often call'd in help, I know not whom,
Three at once have been too weak to keep me down 100

Vort I perceive there's no fastening [Aside
—Well, fair one, then,

That ne'er deceives faith's anchor of her hold,
Come at all seasons, here, be thou the star
To guide those erring women, show the way
Which I will make them follow Why dost start,
Draw back, and look so pale?

Cast My lord!

Vort Come hither,

Nothing but take that oath , thou'lt take a thousand ,
A thousand ¹ nay, a million, or as many
As there be angels registers of oaths
Why, look thee, over-fearful chastity, 110
(That sinn'st in nothing but in too much niceness,)
I'll begin first and swear for thee myself
I know thee a perfection so unstain'd,
So sure, so absolute, I will not pant on it,
But catch time greedily By all those blessings
That blow truth into fruitfulness, and those curses
That with their barren breaths blast perjury,
Thou art as pure as sanctity's best shrine
From all man's mixture, save what's lawful, mine ¹ 119

Cast O, heaven forgive him, he has forsworn himself ¹
[*Aside*

Vort Come, 'tis but going now my way

Cast That's bad enough [*Aside*

Vort I've clear'd all doubts, you see

Cast Good my lord, spare me

Vort How ! it grows later than so For modesty's
sake,

Make more speed this way

Cast Pardon me, my lord,

I cannot

Vort What ?

Cast I dare not

Vort Fail all confidence

In thy weak kind for ever ¹

Devon. Here's a storm

Able to wake ¹ all of our name inhumed,
 And raise them from their sleeps of peace and fame,
 To set the honours of their bloods right here, 130
 Hundred years after a perpetual motion
 Has their true glory been from seed to seed,
 And cannot be chok'd now with a poor grain
 Of dust and earth Her uncle and myself,
 Wild ² in this tempest, as e'er robb'd man's peace,
 Will undertake, upon life's deprivation,
 She shall accept this oath

Vort You do but call me then
 Into a world of more despair and horror,
 Yet since so wilfully you stand engag'd
 In high scorn to be touch'd, with expedition 140
 Perfect your undertakings with your fames,
 Or, by the issues of abus'd belief,
 I'll take the forfeit of lives, lands, and honours,
 And make one ruin serve our joys and yours

Cast Why, here's a height of miseries never reach'd
 yet ¹

I lose myself and others

Devon You may see
 How much we lay in balance with your goodness,
 And had we more, it went, for we presume
 You cannot be religious and so vile—

¹ In the old ed. the line stands—

“Able to *make* all of our name *inhumid*”

The emendation is Dyce's

² The line is corrupt—Dyce suggests “In this wild tempest”

Cast As to forswear myself—'Tis truth, great sir, 150
The honour of your bed hath been abus'd.

Vort O, beyond patience !

Cast But give me hearing, sir
'Twas far from my consent, I was surpris'd
By villains, and so raught ¹

Vort Hear you that, sirs?
O cunning texture to enclose adultery!
Mark but what subtle veil her sin puts on,
Religion brings her to confession first,
Then steps in art to sanctify that lust —
'Tis likely you could be surpris'd!

Cast My lord !

Vort I'll hear no more — Our guard^d seize on those
 lords160

Devon We cannot perish now too fast , make speed
To swift destruction. He breathes most accurst
That lives so long to see his name die first

[*Exeunt* DEVONSHIRE and STAFFORD, guarded]

Hor Here's no² dear³ villany ! [*Aside*

Heng Let him entreat, sir,
That falls in saddest grief for this event,
Which ill begins the fortune of this building
My lord ! [*Takes VORTIGER aside*

Rox What if he should cause me to swear too, captain?

¹ Snatched, carried away

² Ironical. See note 2, p. 55.

³ An epithet denoting excessive goodness or baseness

You know I am as far to seek in honesty
As the worst here can be, I should be sham'd too. 170

Hor Why, fool, they swear by that we worship not;
So you may swear your heart out, and ne'er hurt
yourself.

Rox That was well thought on, I'd quite lost myself
else

Vort You shall prevail in noble suits, my lord,
But this does shame the speaker

Hor I'll step in now,
Though't shall be to no purpose — Good my lord,
Think on your noble and most hopeful issue,
Lord Vortimer, the prince

Vort A bastard, sir!
I would his life were in my fury now!

Cast. That injury stirs my soul to speak the truth 180
Of his conception — Here I take the book, my lord
By all the glorify'd rewards of virtue
And prepar'd punishments for consents in sin,
A queen's hard sorrow ne'er supply'd a kingdom
With issue more legitimate than Vortimer

Vort This takes not out the stain of present shame,
Continuance crowns desert she ne'er can go
For perfect honest that's not always so —
Beshrew thy heart for urging this excuse,
Thou'st justify'd her somewhat

Hor To small purpose 190

Vort Among so many women, not one here
Dare swear a simple chastity! here's an age
To propagate virtue in! Since I've begun,

I'll shame you altogether, and so leave you —
My lord of Kent !

Heng Your highness?

Vort That's your daughter?

Heng Yes, my good lord

Vort Though I'm your guest to-day,
And should be less austere to you or yours,
In this case pardon me, I may not spare her

Heng Then her own goodness friend her '—she comes,
my lord

Vort The tender reputation of a maid
Makes your honour, or else nothing can
The oath you take is not for truth to man,
But to your own white soul, a mighty task
What dare you do in this?

Rox My lord, as much
As chastity can put a woman to
I ask no favour And t'approve the purity
Of what my habit and my time professeth,
As likewise to requite all courteous censure,
Here I take oath I am as free from man
As truth from falsehood, or sanctity from stain

Vort O thou treasure that ravishes the possessor !
I know not where to speed so well again ,
I'll keep thee while I have thee here's a fountain
To spring forth princes and the seeds of kingdoms !
Away with that infection of black honour,
And those her leprous pledges !—
Here will we store succession with true peace ,

And of pure virgins grace the poor increase

[*Exeunt all but HORSUS*

Hor Ha, ha !

He's well provided now here struck my fortunes. 220

With what an impudent confidence she swore honest,

Having th' advantage of the oath ! precious whore !

Methinks I should not hear from fortune next

Under an earldom now . she cannot spend

A night so idly, but to make a lord

With ease, methinks, and play The earl of Kent

Is calm and smooth, like a deep dangerous water ,

He has some secret way , I know his blood ,

The grave's not greedier, nor hell's lord more proud.

Something will hap , for this astonishing choice 230

Strikes pale the kingdom, at which I rejoice [*Exit*

DUMB SHOW

Enter LUPUS, GERMANUS, DEVONSHIRE, and STAFFORD, leading VORTIMER, and crown him VORTIMER comes to them in passion , they neglect him Enter ROXENA in fury, expressing discontent , then they lead out VORTIMER ROXENA gives two Villains gold to murder him, they swear performance, and go with her VORTIMER offers to run on his sword , HORSUS prevents him, and persuades him The lords bring in VORTIMER dead VORTIMER mourns, and submits to them they swear him, and crown him Then enters HENGIST with Saxons VORTIMER draws,

threatens expulsion, and then sends a parley, which HENGIST seems to grant by laying down his weapons so all depart severally

Enter RAYNULPH

Ray Of Pagan blood a queen being chose,
Roxena hight,¹ the Britons rose
For Vortimer, and crown'd him king,
But she soon poison'd that sweet spring
Then unto rule they did restore
Vortiger, and him they swore
Against the Saxons they (constrain'd)
Begg'd peace, treaty, and obtain'd
And now in numbers equally
Upon the plain near Salisbury, 10
A peaceful meeting they decreeen,
Like men of love, no weapon seen
But Hengist, that ambitious lord,
Full of guile, corrupts his word,
As the sequel too well proves —
On that your eyes, on us your loves [Exit

SCENE III

A Plain near Salisbury

Enter HENGIST with Saxons

Heng If we let slip this opportuneful hour
Take leave of fortune, certainty, or thought

¹ Called

Of ever fixing we are loose at root,
 And the least storm may rend us from the bosom
 Of this land's hopes for ever But, dear Saxons,
 Fasten we now, and our unshaken firmness
 Will endure after-ages

First Sax We are resolv'd, my lord

Heng Observe you not how Vortiger the king,
 Base in submission, threaten'd our expulsion,
 His arm held up against us? Is't not time 10
 To make our best prevention? What should check me?
 He has perfected that great work in our daughter,
 And made her queen she can ascend no higher
 Therefore be quick, despatch Here, every man
 Receive into the service of his vengeance
 An instrument of steel, which will unseen

[*Distributing daggers.*

Lurk, like a snake under the innocent shade
 Of a spread summer-leaf there, fly you on
 Take heart, the commons love us, those remov'd
 That are the nerves, our greatness stands improv'd 20

First Sax Give us the word, my lord, and we are
 perfect

Heng That's true, the word,—I lose myself—*Nemf*
your sexes ¹

It shall be that

¹ "The appointment being agreed to on both sides, Hengist, with a new design of villany in his head, ordered his soldiers to carry, every one of them, a long dagger under their garments, and while the conference should be held with the Britons, who would have no suspicion of them, he would give them this word of command, *Nemf oure saxas* at which moment they were all to be ready to seize boldly every one his

First Sax Enough, sir then we strike

Heng. But the king's mine take heed you touch him
not.

First Sax We shall not be at leisure, never fear it,
We shall have work enough of our own, my lord

Heng Calm looks, but stormy souls possess you all !

Enter VORTIGER and British Lords

Vort We see you keep your words in all points firm

Heng No longer may we boast of so much breath
As goes to a word's making, than of care 30
In the preserving of it when 'tis made

Vort You're in a virtuous way, my lord of Kent
And since both sides are met, like sons of peace,
All other arms laid by in signs of favour,
If our conditions be embrac'd—

Heng They are

Vort We'll use no other but these only here

Heng *Nemp your sexes*

British Lords Treason ! treason !

[*The Saxons stab the British Lords*

Heng Follow it to the heart, my trusty Saxons !

It is your liberty, your wealth, and honour — 40
Soft, you are mine, my lord [*Seizing VORTIGER*

next man, and with his drawn dagger stab him Accordingly, at the time and place appointed, they all met, and began to treat of peace and when a fit opportunity for executing his villany served Hengist cried out, *Nemet oure Saxas*, and the same instant seized Vortegirn, and held him by his cloak ' Jeffrey of Monmouth's British History, translated by Aaron Thompson, 1718, 8vo, p. 194. "—*Reed* "*Nemp your sexes*, i.e. Nymet eouer sexes=take your daggers, or short swords —*Dyce*

Vort Take me not basely, when all sense and strength

Lies bound up in amazement at this treachery
What devil hath breath'd this everlasting part
Of falsehood into thee?

Heng Let it suffice

I have you, and will hold you prisoner,
As fast as death holds your best props in silence
We know the hard conditions of our peace,
Slavery or diminution, which we hate
With a joint loathing May all perish thus, 50
That seek to subjugate or lessen us !

Vort O, the strange nooks of guile or subtilty,
When man so cunningly lies hid from man !
Who could expect such treason from thy breast
Such thunder from thy voice ? Or tak'st thou pride
To imitate the fair uncertainty
Of a bright day, that teems a sudden storm,
When the world least expects one ? but of all,
I'll ne'er trust fair sky in a man again
There's the deceitful weather Will you heap
More guilt upon you by detaining me,
Like a cup taken after a sore surfeit,
Even in contempt of health and heaven together ?
What seek you ?

Heng Ransom for your liberty

As I shall like of, or you ne'er obtain it

Vort Here's a most headlong dangerous ambition !
Sow you the seeds of your aspiring hopes
In blood and treason, and must I pay for them ?

Heng. Have not I rais'd you to this height of pride ?
A work of my own merit, since you enforce it 70

Vort There's even the general thanks of all aspirers
When they have all a kingdom can impart,
They write above it still their own desert

Heng I've writ mine true, my lord

Vort That's all their sayings
Have not I rais'd thy daughter to a queen ?

Heng You have the harmony of your pleasure for it ,
You crown your own desires , what's that to me ?

Vort And what will crown yours, sir ?

Heng Faith, things of reason
I demand Kent

Vort Why, you've the earldom of it

Heng The kingdom o't, I mean, without control, 80
In full possession

Vort This is strange in you

Heng It seems you're not acquainted with my blood,
To call this strange

Vort Never was king of Kent,
But who was general king

Heng I'll be the first then
Everything has beginning

Vort No less title ?

Heng Not if you hope for liberty, my lord
So dear a happiness would not be wrong'd
With slighting

Vort Very well take it, I resign it

Heng Why, I thank your grace

Vort Is your great thirst yet satisfied ?

Heng. Faith, my lord,

90

There's yet behind a pair of teeming sisters,
Norfolk and Suffolk, and I've done with you

Vort You've got a dangerous thirst of late, my lord,
Howe'er you came by't

Heng It behoves me then,
For my blood's health, to seek all means to quench it

Vort Them too?

Heng There will nothing be abated, I assure you

Vort You have me at advantage he whom fate
Does captivate, must yield to all Take them

Heng And you your liberty and peace, my lord, 100
With our best love and wishes —Here's an hour
Begins us, Saxons in wealth, fame, and power

[*Exit with Saxons*]

Vort Are these the noblest fruits and fair'st requitals
From works of our own raising?

Methinks,¹ the murder of Constantius
Speaks to me in the voice oft, and the wrongs
Of our late queen, slipt both into one organ

Enter HORSUS

Ambition, hell, my own undoing lust,
And all the brood of plagues, conspire against me
I have not a friend left me

¹ "Shakespeare seems to have imitated this in the *Tempest*, iii 3 —

'Oh, it is monstrous! monstrous!
Methought, the billows spoke, and told me of it,
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper' "—*Read*

Hor My lord, he dies 110
That says it, but yourself, were't that thief-king,
That has so boldly stohn his honours from you ,
A treason that wrings tears from honest manhood.

Vort So rich am I now in thy love and pity,
I feel no loss at all but we must part,
My queen and I to Cambria

Hor. My lord, and I not nam'd,
That have vow'd lasting service to my life's
Extremest minute !

Vort Is my sick fate blest with so pure a friend ? 120

Hor. My lord, no space of earth, nor breadth of sea,
Shall divide me from you

Vort O faithful treasure !
All my lost happiness is made up in thee [Exit

Hor I'll follow you through the world, to cuckold
you,

That's my way now Every one has his toy
While he lives here some men delight in building,¹
A trick of Babel, which will ne'er be left ,
Some in consuming what was rais'd with toiling ,
Hengist in getting honour, I in spoiling [Exit

¹ Cf Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part I Sect. 2, Memb. 3, Subs. 13 — 'Some men are consumed by mad phantastical buildings, by making galleries, cloisters, terraces, walks, orchards, gardens, pools, rillets, bowers, and such like places of pleasure, *inutiles domos*, Xenophon calls them, which howsoever they be delightful things in themselves and acceptable to all beholders, an ornament and befitting some great men, yet unprofitable to others, and the sole overthrow of their estates "

ACT V

SCENE I

A Room in SIMON'S House

Enter SIMON, Glover, Felt-maker, and other of his brethren, AMINADAB, and Servants

Sim Is not that rebel Oliver, that traitor to my year, 'prehended yet?

Amin Not yet, so please your worship

Sim Not yet, sayest thou? how durst thou say, not yet, and see me present? thou malapert, thou art good for nothing but to write and read! Is his loom seized upon?

Amin Yes, if it like your worship, and sixteen yards of fustian

Sim Good! let a yard be saved to mend me between the legs, the rest cut in pieces and given to the poor 'Tis heretic fustian, and should be burnt indeed, but being worn threadbare, the shame will be as great how think you, neighbours?

Glov Greater, methinks, the longer it is wore ,
Where¹ being once burnt, it can be burnt no more

Sim True, wise and most senseless —How now,
sirrah ?

Enter a Footman

What's he approaching here in dusty pumps ?

Amin A footman, sir, to the great king of Kent

Sim The king of Kent ? shake him by the hand for
me 20

Thou'rt welcome, footman lo, my deputy shakes thee !
Come when my year is out, I'll do't myself
If 'twere a dog that came from the king of Kent,
I keep those officers would shake him, I trow
And what's the news with thee, thou well-stew'd footman ?

Foot The king, my master—

Sim Ha !

Foot With a few Saxons,

Intends this night to make merry with you

Sim Merry with me ? I should be sorrow else, fellow,
And take it in ill part , so tell Kent's king
Why was I chosen, but that great men should make 30
Merry with me ? there is a jest indeed !

Tell him I look'd for't , and me much he wrongs,
If he forget *Sim* that cut out his thongs

Foot I'll run with your worship's answer

Sim Do, I prithee [Exit Footman

That fellow will be roasted against supper ,
He's half enough already , his brows baste him

¹ Whereas

The king of Kent ¹ the king of Kirsendom ¹
 Shall not be better welcome ,
 For you must imagine now, neighbours, this is
 The time when Kent stands out of ² Kirsendom, 40
 For he that's king here now was never kirsen'd ³
 This for your more instruction I thought fit,
 That when you're dead you may teach your children
 wit —

Clerk ¹

Amin At your worship's elbow

Sim. I must turn

You from the hall to the kitchen to-night
 Give order that twelve pigs be roasted yellow,
 Nine geese, and some three larks for piddling ⁴ meat,
 And twenty woodcocks I'll bid all my neighbours
 Give charge the mutton come in all blood-raw,
 That's infidel's meat, the king of Kent's a Pagan, 50
 And must be servèd so And let those officers
 That seldom or never go to church bring it in,
 'Twill be the better taken Run, run

[*Exit AMINADAB*]

Come you hither now
 Take all my cushions down and thwack them soundly,
 After my feast of millers, for their buttocks

¹ A corruption of *Christendom*

² An allusion to the proverb "In Kent and Christendom"

³ A corruption of "christened"

⁴ Meat to trifle with A "piddler" was the name for one who ate squeamishly or with little appetite Pope has a curious couplet —

"Content on little I can *piddle* here

On brocoli and mutton round the year "

Have left a peck of flour in them beat them carefully
Over a bolting-hutch,¹ there will be enough
For a pan-pudding, as your dame will handle it
Then put fresh water into both the bough pots, 60
And burn a little juniper² in the hall-chimney

[*Exeunt* Servants

Like a beast as I was, I pissed out the fire last night,
and never dreamt of the king's coming

Re-enter AMINADAB

How now, returned so quickly?

Amin Please your worship, here are a certain company of players—

Sim Ha, players!

Amin Country comedians, interluders, sir, desire your worship's favour and leave to enact in the town-hall 70

Sim In the town-hall? 'tis ten to one I never grant them that Call them before my worship [*Exit* AMINADAB]—If my house will not serve their turn, I would fain see the proudest he lend them a barn

Re-enter AMINADAB with Players³

Now, sir, are you comedians?

Second Play We are, sir, comedians, tragedians, tragi-comedians, comi-tragedians, pastorists, humourists,

¹ The wooden trough into which meal is sifted

² Juniper-wood was burnt to sweeten rooms

³ It appears presently that these "Players" had "taken the name of country comedians, to abuse simple people."

clownists, satirists we have them, sir, from the hug to the smile, from the smile to the laugh, from the laugh to the handkerchief 80

Sim You're very strong in the wrists, methinks. And must all these good parts be cast away upon pedlars and maltmen, ha?

First Play For want of better company, if it please your worship

Sim What think you of me, my masters? Hum, have you audacity enough to play before so high a person as myself? Will not my countenance daunt you? for if you play before me, I shall often look on you, I give you that warning before hand Take it not ill, my masters, I shall laugh at you, and truly when I am least offended with you it is my humour, but be not you abashed 93

First Play Sir, we have play'd before a lord ere now, Though we be country actors

Sim A lord? ha, ha!

Thou'lt find it a harder thing to please a mayor

Second Play We have a play wherein we use a horse

Sim Fellows, you use no horse-play in my house, My rooms are rubb'd keep it for hackney-men

First Play We'll not offer it to your worship 100

Sim Give me a play without a beast, I charge you

Second Play That's hard, without a cuckold or a drunkard?

Sim O, those beasts are often the best men in a parish, and must not be kept out But which is your merriest play? that I would hearken after

Second Play Your worship shall hear their names, and take your choice

Sim And that's plain dealing Come, begin, sir

Second Play *The Whirligig, The Whibble, The Car-widgeon* 110

Sim Hey-day ! what names are these ?

Second Play New names of late *The Wildgoose Chase* ¹

Sim I understand thee now

Second Play *Gull upon Gull*

Sim Why this is somewhat yet

First Play *Woodcock of our side* ²

Sim Get thee further off then

Second Play *The Cheater and the Clown*

Sim Is that come up again ? 120

That was a play when I was 'prentice first

Second Play Ay, but the Cheater has learn'd more tricks of late,

And gulls the Clown with new additions

Sim Then is your Clown a coxcomb, which is he ?

First Play This is our Clown, sir

Sim Fie, fie, your company must fall upon him and beat him he's too fair, i'faith, to make the people laugh

First Play Not as he may be drest, sir

Sim Faith, dress him how you will, I'll give him that

¹ It is hardly likely that this is an allusion to Fletcher's comedy

² "Taylor, the water poet, in the preface to *Sir Gregory Nonsense*, mentions a book so called, but perhaps he merely invented the title — This expression was proverbial, and frequently occurs in our early writers *woodcock* was a cant term for a simpleton" — *Dyce*

gift, he will never look half scurvily enough O, the clowns¹ that I have seen in my time¹ The very peeping out of one of them would have made a young heir laugh, though his father lay a-dying, a man undone in law the day before (the saddest case that can be) might for his twopence² have burst himself with laughing, and ended all his miseries Here was a merry world, my masters¹

137

Some talk of things of state, of puling stuff,
There's nothing in a play to³ a clown, if he
Have the grace to hit on't, that's the thing indeed
The king shows well, but he sets off the king
But not the king of Kent, I mean not so,
The king is one, I mean, I do not know

Second Play Your worship speaks with safety, like a
rich man,

And for your finding fault, our hopes are greater,
Neither with him the Clown, nor me the Cheater

Sim Away, then, shift, Clown, to thy motley crupper

[*Exeunt Players*]

We'll see them first, the king shall after supper

¹ "Nash tells us that, 'amongst other cholericke wise Justices he was one that, hauing a play presented before him and his Township, by Tarlton and the rest of his fellows, her Maiesties seruants, as they were new entring into their first merriment (as they call it) the people began exceedingly to laugh, when Tarlton first peept out his head'—*Pierce Pennilesse*, sig D 2, ed 1595 And in the Præludium to Goff's *Careless Shepherdes* 1656, I hrift says—

'I never saw Rheade peeping through the Curtain,

But ravishing joy enter'd into my heart'—p 5 —*Dyce*

² Old ed "2d, which Dodsley absurdly printed "second"

³ In comparison with

Glov. I commend your worship's wisdom in that,
master mayor. 150

Sim Nay, 'tis a point of justice, if it be well
examined, not to offer the king worse than I'll see
myself For a play may be dangerous I have known
a great man poisoned in a play—

Glov What, have you, master mayor?

Sim But to what purpose many times, I know not.

Felt. Methinks they should [not] destroy one an-
other so

Sim O, no, no! he that's poisoned is always made
privy to it, that's one good order they have among
them —[*A shout within*] What joyful throat is that?
Aminadab, what is the meaning of this cry? 162

Amin The rebel is taken

Sim Oliver the puritan?

Amin Oliver, puritan, and fustian-weaver altogether

Sim Fates, I thank you for this victorious day!
Bonfires of pease-straw burn, let the bells ring!

Glov There's two in mending, and you know they
cannot

Sim 'Las, the tenor's broken! ring out the treble!

Enter OLIVER, brought in by Officers

I'm over-cloy'd with joy —Welcome, thou rebel! 170

Oliv I scorn thy welcome, I

Sim Art thou yet so stout?

Wilt thou not stoop for grace? then get thee out

Oliv I was not born to stoop but to my loom,

That seiz'd upon, my stooping days are done

In plain terms, if thou hast anything to say to me, send

me away quickly, this is no bidding-place, I understand there are players in thy house, despatch me, I charge thee, in the name of all the brethren

Sim Nay, now, proud rebel, I will make thee stay,
And, to thy greater torment, see a play 180

Olv O devil! I conjure thee by Amsterdam ¹¹

Sim Our word is past,
Justice may wink a while, but see at last

[*Trumpet sounds* ² to announce the commencement of the play

The play begins Hold, stop him, stop him!

Olv O that profane trumpet! O, O!

Sim Set him down there, I charge you, officers

Olv I'll hide my ears and stop ³ my eyes

Sim Down with his golls,⁴ I charge you

Olv O tyranny, tyranny! revenge it, tribulation!

For rebels there are many deaths, but sure the only way
To execute a puritan, is seeing of a play 191
O, I shall swoond ⁵

Sim Which if thou dost, to spite thee,
A player's boy shall bring thee aqua-vitæ

Enter First Player as First Cheater

Olv O, I'll not swoond at all for't, though I die

¹ Amsterdam was the city of refuge for fanatics, who found employment there as button makers and weavers

² Concerning the practice of sounding a trumpet before the commencement of a play see Collier's *Hist of Engl Dram Lit* vol iii p 251 2nd ed

³ So the old ed Dyce reads I'll stop my ears and hide my eyes — but the absurdity was doubtless intentional

⁴ A cant term for hands

⁵ Swoon

Sim Peace, here's a rascal¹ list and edify

First Play *I say still he's an ass that cannot live by his wits*

Sim What a bold rascal's this¹ he calls us all asses at first dash sure none of us live by our wits, unless it be Oliver the puritan

Olv I scorn as much to live by my wits as the proudest of you all 101

Sim Why then you're an ass for company, so hold your prating

Enter Second Player as Second Cheater

First¹ Play *Fellow in arms, welcome¹ the news, the news?*

Sim Fellow in arms, quoth he? He may well call him fellow in arms, I am sure they're both out at the elbows

Second Play *Be lively, my heart, be lively, the booty is at hand He's but a fool of a yeoman's eldest son, he's balanced on both sides, bully,² he's going to buy household-stuff with one pocket, and to pay rent with the other* 111

First Play *And if this be his last day, my chuck, he shall forfeit his lease, quoth the one pocket, and eat his meat in wooden platters, quoth the other*

Sim Faith, then he's not so wise as he ought to be, to let such tatterdemallions get the upper hand of him

First Play *He comes*

¹ Old ed "2

² Comrade

Enter Third Player as Clown

Second Play Ay, but smally to our comfort, with both his hands in his pockets How is it possible to pick a lock, when the key is on the inside of the door? 120

Sim O neighbours, here's the part now that carries away the play¹ if the clown miscarry, farewell my hopes for ever, the play's spoiled

Third Play They say there is a foolish kind of thing called a cheater abroad, that will gull any yeoman's son of his purse, and laugh in his face like an Irishman I would fain meet with some of these creatures I am in as good state to be gulled now as ever I was in my life, for I have two purses at this time about me, and I would fain be acquainted with that rascal that would take one of them now 130

Sim Faith, thou mayest be acquainted with two or three, that will do their good wills, I warrant thee

First Play That way's too plain, too easy, I'm afraid

Second Play Come, sir, your most familiar cheats take best,

They show like natural things and least suspected.

Give me a round shilling quickly

First Play It will fetch but one of his hands neither, if it take

Second Play Thou art too covetous let's have one out first, prithee, there's time enough to fetch out th' other after Thou liest, 'tis lawful current money [They draw 141

First Play I say 'tis copper in some countries

Third Play Here is a fray towards, but I will hold my hands, let who will part them

Second Play Copper? I defy thee, and now I shall disprove

thee Look you, here's an honest yeoman's son of the country, a man of judgment—

Third Play Pray you be covered, sir, I have eggs in my cap, and cannot put it off

Second Play Will you be tried by him?

First Play I am content, sir 150

Sim. They look rather as if they would be tried next sessions

First Play Pray give your judgment of this piece of coin, sir

Third Play Nay, if it be coin you strive about, let me see it, I love money

First Play Look on it well, sir [They pick his pocket

Second Play Let him do his worst, sir

Third Play You'd both need wear cut¹ clothes, you're so choleric

Second Play Nay, rub it, and spare not, sir

Third Play Now by this silver, gentlemen, it is good money, would I had a hundred of them! 161

Second Play We hope well, sir — Th' other pocket, and we are made men [Exit First and Second Players

Sim. O neighbours, I begin to be sick of this fool, to see him thus cozened! I would make his case my own

Third Play Still would I meet with these things called cheaters

Sim. A whoreson coxcomb, they have met with thee I can no longer endure him with patience

¹ A pun is intended "Cut work" was the name for "open work in linen, stamped or cut by hand" (*Vares*), and "cutter" was a cant name for swaggerer

Third Play. O my rent ! my whole year's rent ! 170

Sim A murrain on you ! This makes us landlords stay so long for our money

Third Play The cheaters have been here

Sim A scurvy hobby-horse, that could not leave his money with me, having such a charge about him ! A pox on thee for an ass ! thou play a clown ! I will commit thee for offering it —Officers, away with him !

Glov What means your worship ? why, you'll spoil the play, sir

Sim Before the king of Kent shall be thus serv'd,
I'll play the clown myself —Away with him ! 180

[Officers seize Third Player

Third Play With me ? if it please your worship, 'twas my part.

Sim But 'twas a foolish part as ever thou playedst in thy life I'll make thee smoke for it, I'll teach thee to understand to play a clown, thou shalt know every man is not born to it —Away with him quickly ! He'll have the other pocket picked else, I heard them say it with my own ears

Re-enter Second Player as Second Cheater

See, he's come in another disguise to cheat thee again,

[Exit Third Player with Officers

Second Play Pish, whither goes he now ? 190

Sim Come on, sir, let us see what your knaveship can do at me now you must not think you have a clown in

hand The fool I have committed too, for playing the part

[*Throws off his gown, discovering his doublet with a satin forepart, and a canvas back*

Second Play What's here to do?

Glov Fie, good sir, come away will your worship base yourself to play a clown?

Second Play I beseech your worship let us have our own clown, I know not how to go forwards else 199

Sim Knave, play out thy part with me, or I'll lay thee by the heels all the days of thy life —Why, how now, my masters, who is that laughed at me? cannot a man of worship play the clown a little for his pleasure, but he must be laughed at? Do you know who I am? Is the king's deputy of no better account among you? Was I chosen to be laughed at?—Where's my clerk?

Amin Here, if it please your worship

Sim Take a note of all those that laugh at me, that when I have done, I may commit them Let me see who dare do it now —And now to you once again, sir cheater look you, here are my purse-strings, I do defy thee 212

Second Play Good sir, tempt me not, my part is so written, that I should cheat your worship if you were my father

Sim I should have much joy to have such a rascal to my son

Second Play Therefore I beseech your worship pardon me, the part has more knavery in it than when your worship saw it at first I assure you you'll be deceived

in it, sir, the new additions will take any man's purse in Kent or Kirsendom 222

Sim If thou canst take my purse, I'll give it thee freely

And do thy worst, I charge thee, as thou'lt answer it

Second Play I shall offend your worship

Sim Knave, do it quickly

Second Play Say you so? then there's for you, and here is for me

[*Throws meal in his face takes his purse, and exit*

Sim O bless me! neighbours, I am in a fog,
A cheater's fog, I can see nobody

Glov Run, follow him, officers 230

Sim Away! let him go, he will have all your purses, if he come back A pox on your new additions!¹ they spoil all the plays that ever they come in the old way had no such roguery in it Call you this a merry comedy, when a man's eyes are put out in't? Brother Honey-suckle——

[*Exit AMINADAB*

Felt What says your sweet worship?

Sim I make you deputy, to rule the town till I can see again, which will be within these nine days at farthest Nothing grieves me now, but that I hear Oliver the rebel laugh at me A pox on your puritan face! this will make you in love with plays as long as you live; we shall not keep you from them now 243

¹ There is an allusion to the practice, so common in Elizabethan times, of introducing additional matter into plays on the occasion of their revival

Oliv In sincerity, I was never better pleased at an exercise ¹ Ha, ha, ha !

Sim Neighbours, what colour was the dust the rascal threw in my face ?

Glow 'Twas meal, if it please your worship

Sim Meal ! I am glad of it, I'll hang the miller for selling it. 250

Glow Nay, ten to one the cheater never bought it, he stole it certainly

Sim Why, then I'll hang the cheater for stealing it, and the miller for being out of the way when he did it

Felt Ay, but your worship was in the fault yourself, you bid him do his worst

Sim His worst ? that's true, but the rascal hath done his best, for I know not how a villain could put out a man's eyes better, and leave them in his head, as he has done mine 260

Re enter AMINADAB

Amin Where is my master's worship ?

Sim How now, Aminadab ? I hear thee, though I see thee not

Amin You are sure cozened, sir, they are all professed cheaters they have stolen two silver spoons, and the clown took his heels with all celerity They only take the name of country comedians to abuse simple people with a printed play or two, which they bought at Canterbury for sixpence, and what is worse, they speak but what they list of it, and fribble out the rest 270

¹ The week-day sermons of the Puritans were called *exercises*

Sim Here's no¹ abuse to the commonwealth, if a man could see to look into it¹

But mark the cunning of these cheating slaves,
First they make justice blind, then play the knaves.

Heng [*without*] Where's master mayor?

Glov Od's precious, brother! the king of Kent is newly alighted

Sim The king of Kent!

Where is he? that I should live to this day,
And yet not live to see to bid him welcome! 280

Enter HENGISI attended

Heng Where is Simonides, our friendly host?

Sim Ah, blind as one that had been fox'd² a seven-night!

Heng Why, how now, man?

Sim Faith, practising a clown's part for your grace,
I have practis'd both my eyes out

Heng What need you practise that?

Sim A man is never too old to learn, your grace will say so, when you hear the jest of it the truth is, my lord, I meant to have been merry, and now it is my luck to weep water and oatmeal, I shall see again at supper, I make no doubt of it 291

Heng This is strange to me, sirs

Enter a Gentleman

Gent Arm, arm, my lord!

Heng What's that?

¹ See note 2, p 55

² A cant term for "drunk."

Gent With swiftest speed,
If ever you'll behold the queen, your daughter,
Alive again

Heng Roxena ?

Gent They are besieg'd
Aurehus Ambrose, and his brother Uther,
With numbers infinite of British forces,
Beset their castle, and they cannot 'scape
Without your speedy succour

Heng For her safety
I'll forget food and rest , away ' 300

Sim I hope your worship will hear the jest ere you go

Heng The jest ' torment me not

Sim I'll follow you to Wales with a dog and a bell,
but I will tell it you

Heng Unseasonable folly ' [Exit with Attendants

Sim 'Tis sign of war when great men disagree
Look to the rebel well, till I can see ,
And when my sight's recover'd, I will have
His eyes pull'd out for a fortnight

Olv My eyes ? hang thee ' 310
A deadly sin or two shall pluck them out first ,
That is my resolution Ha, ha, ha ' [Exeunt

SCENE II

Before a Castle in Wales

*Enter AURELIUS and UTHUR, and Lords, with
Soldiers*

Uth My lord, the castle is so fortified—

Aur Let wild-fire ruin it,
That his destruction may appear to him
In the figure of heaven's wrath at the last day,
That murderer of our brother Hence, away !
I'll send my heart no peace till't be consum'd

[Enter above VORTIGER and HORSUS

Uth There he appears again—behold, my lord !

Aur O that the zealous fire on my soul's altar,
To the high birth of virtue consecrated,
Would fit me with a lightning now to blast him, 10
Even as I look upon him !

Uth Good my lord,
Your anger is too noble and too precious
To waste itself on guilt so foul as his
Let ruin work her will

Vort Begirt all round ?

Hor All, all, my lord , 'tis folly to make doubt of't
You question things, that horror long ago
Resolv'd us on

Vort Give me leave, Horsus, though—

Hor Do what you will, sir , question them again , I'll tell them to you

Vort Not so, sir , 20
I will not have them told again

Hor It rests then—

Vort That's an ill word put in, when thy heart knows

There is no rest at all, but torment waking ¹

Hor True , my heart finds it, that sits weeping blood now

For poor Roxena's safety —[*Aside*] You'll confess, my lord,

My love to you has brought me to this danger ?

I could have liv'd, like Hengist king of Kent,

London, York, Lincoln, and Winchester,

Under the power of my command, the portion

Of my most just desert, enjoyèd now 30

By pettier deservers

Vort Say you so, sir ?

And you'll confess, since you began confession,

(A thing I should have died ere I had thought on),

You've marr'd the fashion of your affection utterly.

In your own wicked counsel, there you paid me

You were bound in conscience to love me after ,

You were bound to't, as men in honesty,

That vitiate virgins, to give dowries to them

My faith was pure before to a faithful woman

¹ Old ed "making"

Hor My lord, my counsel—

Vort Why, I'll be judg'd by these 40
That knit death in their brows, and hold me now
Not worth the acception of a flattery,
Most of whose faces smil'd when I smil'd once —
My lords'

Uth Reply not, brother

Vort Seeds of scorn,
I mind you not, I speak to them alone
Whose force makes yours a power which else were
none

Show me the main food of your hate,
Which cannot be the murder of Constantius,
That crawls in your revenges, for your loves
Were violent long since that

First Lord And had been still, 50
If from that Pagan wound thou'dst kept thee free,
But when thou fled'st from heaven, we fled from
thee

Vort This was your counsel now

Hor Mine? 'twas the counsel
Of your own lust and blood, your appetite knows it

Vort May thunder strike me from these walls, my
lords,

And leave me many leagues off from your eyes,
If this be not the man whose Stygian soul
Breath'd forth that counsel to me, and sole plotter
Of all those false injurious disgraces,

That have abus'd the virtuous patience 60
Of our religious queen

Hor A devil in madness !

Vort Upon whose life I swear there sticks no
stain

But what's most wrongful and where now she thinks
A rape dwells on her honour, only I
Her ravisher was, and his the policy

Aur Inhuman practice !

Vort Now you know the truth,
Will his death serve your fury ?

Hor My death ?

Vort Say, will it do it ?

Hor Say they should say 'twould do't ?

Vort Why, then it must

Hor It must ?

Vort It shall —

70

Speak but the word, it shall be yielded up

Hor Believe him not, he cannot do it

Vort Cannot ?

Hor 'Tis but a false and base insinuation
For his own life, and like his late submission

Vort O sting to honour ! Alive or dead, thou
goest

For that word's rudeness only [*Stabs him*

First Lord See, sin needs

No other destruction than [what] it breeds
In its own bosom

Vort Such another brings him

Hor What ! has thy vile rage stamp't a wound upon
me ?

I'll send one to thy soul shall never heal for't. 80

Vort How, to my soul ?

Hor It shall be thy master torment,
Both for the pain and th' everlastingness

Vort Ha, ha, ha !

Hor Dost laugh ? take leave of't all eternity
Shall never see thee do so much again
Know, thou'rt a cuckold

Vort What !

Hor You change too soon, sir
Roxena, whom thou'st rais'd to thy own ruin,
She was my whore in Germany

Vort Burst me open,
The violence of whirlwinds !

Hor Hear me out first
For her embrace, which my flesh yet sits warm in, 90
I was thy friend and follower

Vort Defend me,
Thou most imperious noise that starts the world !

Hor And to serve both our lusts, I practis'd with
thee

Against thy virtuous queen

Vort Bane to all comforts !

Hor Whose faithful sweetness, too precious for thy
blood,

I made thee change for love's hypocrisy

Vort Insufferable !

Hor Only to make
My way to pleasure fearless, free, and fluent

Vort Hell's trump is in that throat !

Hor It shall sound shriller

Vort I'll dam it up with death first

[*They stab each other Enter ROXENA above*

Rox O for succour !

Who's near me ? Help me, save me ! the flame follows
me, 100

'Tis in the figure of young Vortimer, the prince,
Whose life I took by poison

Hor Hold out, breath,
And I shall find thee quickly

Vort I will tug
Thy soul out here

Hor Do, monster !

Rox Vortiger !

Vort Monster !

Rox My lord !

Vort Toad ! Pagan !

Hor Viper ! Christian !

Rox O hear me, O help me, my love, my lord ! 'tis
here !

Horsus, look up, if not to succour me,
To see me yet consum'd O what is love,
When life is not regarded !

Vort What strength's left
I'll fix upon thy throat

Hor I have some force yet 110

[*They stab each other, HORSUS falls*

*Enter DEVONSHIRE, STAFFORD, and Soldiers, with
HENGIST prisoner*

Hen The consumer has been here , she's gone, she's
lost ,

In glowing cinders now lie all my joys
The headlong fortune of my rash captivity
Strikes not so deep a wound into my hopes
As thy dear loss

Aur Her father and her uncle ¹

First Lord They are indeed, my lord

Aur Part of my wishes

What fortunate power has prevented ¹ me,
And ere my love came, brought them victory ? 140

First Lord My wonder sticks in Hengist, king of
Kent

Devonshire My lord, to make that plain which now I
see

Fix'd in astonishment , the only name
Of your return and being, brought such gladness
To this distracted kingdom, that, to express
A thankfulness to heaven, it grew great
In charitable actions , from which goodness
We taste our liberty, who liv'd engag'd
Upon the innocence of woman's honour,
(A kindness that even threaten'd to undo us) 150

¹ Anticipated

And having newly but enjoy'd the benefit
And fruits of our enlargement, 'twas our happiness
To intercept this monster of ambition,
Bred in these times of usurpation,
The rankness of whose insolence and treason
Grew to such height, 'twas arm'd to bid you battle ,
Whom, as our fame's redemption, on our knees
We present captive

Aur Had it needed reason,
You richly came provided I understood
Not your deserts till now —My honour'd lords, 160
Is this that German Saxon, whose least thirst
Could not be satisfied under a province?

Heng Had but my fate directed this bold arm
To thy life, the whole kingdom had been mine ,
That was my hope's great aim I have a thirst
Could never have been full quench'd under all ,
The whole must do't, or nothing

Aur A strange drought !
And what a little ground shall death now teach you
To be content withal !

Heng Why let it then,
For none else can , you've nam'd the only way 170
To limit my ambition , a full cure
For all my fading hopes and sickly fears ,
Nor shall it be less welcome to me now,
Than a fresh acquisition would have been
Unto my new built kingdoms Life to me,
'Less it be glorious, is a misery

THE OLD LAW.

*The Excellent Comedy, called The Old Law, or A new way
to please you*

By { *Phil Massinger*
 Tho Middleton
 William Rowley

*Acted before the King and Queene at Salisbury House, and at
severall other places, with great Applause Together with an
exact and perfect Catalogue of all the Playes, with the Authors
Names, and what are Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Pastorals,
Masks, Interludes, more exactly Printed then ever before London,
Printed for Edward Archer, at the signe of the Adam and Eve, in
Little Britaine 1656 4to*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

EVANDER, *Duke of Epire*
CRATILUS, *the executioner*
CREON, *father to SIMONIDES*
SIMONIDES, } *young courtiers*
CLEANTHES, }
LYSANDER, *husband to EUGENIA, and uncle to CLEANTHES*
LEONIDES, *father to CLEANTHES*
GNOTHO, *the clown*
Lawyers
Courtiers
Dancing master
Butler,
Bailiff,
Tailor,
Coachman,
Footman,
Cook,
Clerk
Drawer
} *Servants to CREON*

ANTIGONA, *wife to CREON*
HIPPOLITA, *wife to CLEANTHES*
EUGENIA, *wife to LYSANDER, and mother to PARTHENIA*
PARTHENIA
AGATHA, *wife to GNOTHO*
Old women, wives to CREON'S servants
Courtesan

Fiddlers, Servants, Guard, &c

SCENE, EPIRE

THE OLD LAW.



ACT I

SCENE I

A Room in CRLON's House

Enter SIMONIDES and two Lawyers

Sim Is the law firm, sir?

First Law The law ' what more firm, sir,
More powerful, forcible, or more permanent?

Sim By my troth, sir,
I partly do believe it, conceive, sir,
You have indirectly answered my question
I did not doubt the fundamental grounds
Of law in general, for the most solid,
But this particular law that me concerns,
Now, at the present, if that be firm and strong,
And powerful, and forcible, and permanent? 10
I am a young man that has an old father

Second Law Nothing more strong, sir
It is—*Secundum statutum principis, confirmatum cum voce*

senatus,¹ *et voce reipublicæ*, nay, *consummatum et exemplificatum*

Is it not in force,
When divers have already tasted it,
And paid their lives for penalty?

Sim 'Tis true

My father must be next, this day completes
Full fourscore years upon him

20

Second Law He's here, then,
Sub pœna statuti hence I can tell him,
Truer than all the physicians in the world,
He cannot live out to-morrow, this
Is the most certain climacterical year—
'Tis past all danger, for there's no 'scaping it
What age is your mother, sir?

Sim Faith, near her days too,
Wants some two of threescore

First Law So! she'll drop away
One of these days too here's a good age now
For those that have old parents and rich inheritance!

Sim And, sir, 'tis profitable for others too 30
Are there not fellows that lie bedrid in their offices,
That younger men would walk lustily in?
Churchmen, that even the second infancy
Hath silenc'd, yet hath spun out their lives so long,
That many pregnant and ingenious spirits
Have languish'd in their hop'd reversions,
And died upon the thought? and, by your leave, sir,

¹ Old ed "senatum"

Have you not places fill'd up in the law
 By some grave senators, that you imagine
 Have held them long enough, and such spirits as
 you, 40
 Were they remov'd, would leap into their dignities?

First Law *Dic quibus in terris, et eris mihi magnus*
*Apollo*¹

Sim But tell me, faith, your fair opinion
 Is't not a sound and necessary law,
 This, by the duke enacted?

First Law Never did Greece,
 Our ancient seat of brave philosophers,
 'Mongst all her *nomothetæ*² and lawgivers,
 Not when she flourish'd in her sevenfold sages,
 Whose living memory can never die,
 Produce a law more grave and necessary 50

Sim I'm of that mind too

Second Law I will maintain, sir,
 Draco's oligarchy, that the government
 Of community reduced into few,
 Fram'd a fair state, Solon's *chreokopia*,³
 That cut off poor men's debts to their rich creditors,
 Was good and charitable, but not full allow'd,⁴
 His *seisacthera*⁵ did reform that error,

¹ Virgil, *Eclæg* iii 104

² Old ed "nomotheta."

³ *Χρεωκοπία*, a cancelling of debts — Old ed "Crecopedi"

⁴ Approved

⁵ *Σεισάχθεια*, an abolition of debt (literally, a shaking off of burthens)
 — Old ed "Sisathie"

His honourable senate of Areopagitæ
Lycurgus was more loose, and gave too free
And licentious reins unto his discipline , 60
As that a young woman, in her husband's weakness,
Might choose her able friend to propagate ,
That so the commonwealth might be supplied
With hope of lusty spirits Plato did err,
And so did Aristotle, [in] allowing
Lewd and luxurious limits to their laws
But now our Epire, our Epire's Evander,
Our noble and wise Prince, has hit the law
That all our predecessive students
Have miss'd, unto their shame

Enter CLEANTHES

Sim Forbear the praise, sir, 70
'Tis in itself most pleasing —Cleanthes !
O lad, here's a spring for young plants to flourish !
The old trees must down kept the sun from us ,
We shall rise now, boy

Clean Whither, sir, I pray ?
To the bleak air of storms, among those trees
Which we had shelter from ?

Sim. Yes, from our growth,
Our sap and livelihood, and from our fruit.
What ! 'tis not jubilee with thee yet, I think,
Thou look'st so sad on't. How old is thy father ?

Clean Jubilee ! no, indeed , 'tis a bad year with
me 80

Sim Prithce, how old's thy father? then I can tell thee.

Clean. I know not how to answer you, Simonides ,
He's too old, being now exposed
Unto the rigour of a cruel edict ,
And yet not old enough by many years,
'Cause I'd not see him go an hour before me

Sim These very passions ¹ I speak to my father
Come, come, here's none but friends here, we may speak
Our insides freely , these are lawyers, man,
And shall be counsellors shortly

Clean They shall be now, sir, 90
And shall have large fees if they'll undertake
To help a good cause, for it wants assistance ,
Bad ones, I know, they can insist upon

First Law. O sir, we must undertake of both parts
But the good we have most good in

Clean Pray you, say,
How do you allow of this strange edict ?

First Law *Secundum justitiam* , by my faith, sir,
The happiest edict that ever was in Epire

Clean What, to kill innocents, sir ? it cannot be,
It is no rule in justice there to punish 100

First Law O sir,
You understand a conscience, but not law

Clean Why, sir, is there so main a difference ?

First Law You'll never be good lawyer if you understand not that

¹ Sorrowful speeches

Clean I think, then, 'tis the best to be a bad one.

First Law Why, sir, the very letter and the sense both do¹ overthrow you in this statute, which² speaks, that every man living to fourscore years, and women to three-score, shall then be cut off, as fruitless to the republic, and law shall finish what nature linger'd at 110

Clean And this suit shall soon be despatch'd in law?

First Law It is so plain it can have no demur,
The church-book overthrows it

Clean And so it does,
The church-book³ overthrows it, if you read it well

First Law Still, you run from the law into error!
You say it takes the lives of innocents,
I say no, and so says common reason,
What man lives to fourscore, and women to three,
That can die innocent?

Clean A fine lawfull evasion!
Good sir, rehearse the full statute to me 120

Sim Fie! that's too tedious, you have already
The full sum in the brief relation

Clean Sir,
'Mongst many words may be found contradictions,
And these men dare sue and wrangle with a statute,
If they can pick a quarrel with some error

¹ Old ed "both do both"

² Old ed "which that"

³ As Gifford observes, the lawyer's "church-book" is the parish-register, and Cleanthes "church-book" is Holy Writ.

Second Law Listen, sir, I'll gather it as brief as I can
for you

Anno primo Evandri, Be it for the care and good of the
commonwealth, (for divers necessary reasons that we shall
urge,) thus peremptorily enacted,—

Clean A fair pretence, if the reasons foul it not! 130

Second Law That all men living in our dominions of
Epire, in their decayed nature, to the age of fourscore, or
women to the age of threescore, shall on the same day be
instantly put to death, by those means and instruments that
a former proclamation, had to this purpose, through our said
territories dispersed

Clean There was no woman in this senate, certain 137

First Law That these men—being past their bearing arms
to aid and defend their country, past their manhood and
liveliness to propagate any further issue to their posterity,
and as well past their councils (which overgrown gravity is
now run into dotage) to assist their country, to whom, in
common reason, nothing should be so wearisome as their own
lives,—as it may be supposed, is tedious to their successive
heirs, whose times are spent in the good of their country,
yet wanting the means to maintain it, and are like to
grow old before their inheritance (born to them) come to
their necessary use for the women,¹ for that they never
were defence to their country, never by counsel admitted to the
assist of government of their country, only necessary to the
propagation of posterity, and now, at the age of threescore,
they be past² that good, and all their goodness it is thought fit,

¹ Old ed. "for the which are the women"

² Old ed. "to be past"

then, (a quarter abated from the more worthy member) they¹ be put to death, as is before recited provided that, for the just and impartial execution of this our statute, the example shall first begin in and about our court, which ourself will see carefully performed, and not, for a full month following, extend any further into our dominions Dated the sixth of the second month, at our Palace Royal in Epire 159

Clean A fine edict, and very fairly gilded !
And is there no scruple in all these words
To demur the law upon occasion ?

Sim Pox ! 'tis an unnecessary inquisition ,
Prithee, set him not about it

Second Law Troth, none, sir
It is so evident and plain a case,
There is no succour for the defendant

Clean Possible ! can nothing help in a good case ?

First Law Faith, sir, I do think there may be a hole,
Which would protract—delay, if not remedy

Clean Why, there's some comfort in that good sir,
speak it 170

First Law Nay, you must pardon me for that, sir

Sim Prithee, do not ,
It may ope a wound to many sons and heirs,
That may die after it

Clean Come, sir, I know
How to make you speak —will this do't ?

[*Gives him his purse.*]

First Law I will afford you my opinion, sir

¹ Old ed ' to "

Clean Pray you, repeat the literal words expressly,
The time of death

Sim 'Tis an unnecessary question , prithee, let it alone

Second Law Hear his opinion , 'twill be fruitless, sir
That man at the age of fourscore, and women at threescore,
shall the same day be put to death 182

First Law Thus I help the man to twenty-one years
more

Clean That were a fair addition

First Law Mark it, sir , we say, man is not at age
'Till he be one-and-twenty , before, 'tis ¹ infancy,
And adolescence , nor, by that addition,
Fourscore he cannot be till a hundred and one

Sim O poor evasion '
He's fourscore years old, sir

First Law That helps more, sir , 190
He begins to be old at fifty, so, at fourscore
He's but thirty years old , so, believe it, sir,
He may be twenty years in declination ,
And so long may a man linger and live by t

Sim The worst hope of safety that e'er I heard '
Give him his fee again, 'tis not worth two deniers

First Law There's no law for restitution of fees, sir

Clean No, no, sir , I meant it lost when 'twas given

Enter CREON and ANTIGONA

Sim No more, good sir '
Here are ears unnecessary for your doctrine 200

¹ Old ed his "

First Law I have spoke out my fee, and I have done,

SIR

Sim O my dear father !

Creon Tush ! meet me not in exclams ,¹

I understand the worst, and hope no better

A fine law ! if this hold, white heads will be cheap,

And many watchmen's places will be vacant ,

Forty of 'em I know my seniors,

That did due deeds of darkness too —their country²

Has watch'd 'em a good turn for't,

And ta'en 'em napping now

The fewer hospitals will serve too, many 210

May be us'd for stews and brothels , and those people

Will never trouble 'em to fourscore

Ant Can you play and sport with sorrow, sir ?

Creon Sorrow ! for what, Antigona ? for my life ?

My sorrow's I have kept it so long well,

With bringing it up unto so ill an end

I might have gently lost it in my cradle,

Before my nerves and ligaments grew strong,

To bind it faster to me

Sim For mine own sake,

I should have been sorry for that

Creon In my youth 220

I was a soldier, no coward in my age ,

I never turn'd my back upon my foe ,

¹ Exclamations

² So Gifford and Dyce The old ed gives—

"That did due deeds of darknesse to their countrey,
Has watch'd em, ' &c

I have felt nature's winters, sicknesses,¹
Yet ever kept a lively sap in me
To greet the cheerful spring of health again
Dangers on horseback,² on foot, by water,
I have 'scap'd to this day , and yet this day,
Without all help of casual accidents,
Is only deadly to me, 'cause it numbers
Fourscore years to me Where is the fault now? 230
I cannot blame time, nature, nor my stars,
Nor aught but tyranny Even kings themselves
Have sometimes tasted an even fate with me
He that has been a soldier all his days,
And stood in personal opposition
'Gainst darts and arrows, the extremes of heat
And pinching cold, has treacherously at home,
In's secured³ quiet, by a villain's hand
Been⁴ basely lost, in his stars' ignorance —
And so must I die by a tyrant's sword 240

First Law O say not so, sir , it is by the law

Creon And what's that, sir, but the sword of tyranny,
When it is brandish'd against innocent lives ?
I'm now upon my deathbed, sir, and 'tis fit
I should unbosom my free conscience,
And show the faith I die in — I do believe
'Tis tyranny that takes my life

¹ I should prefer "winter sicknesses"

² Gifford and Dyce read "Dangers on horse on foot, [by land,] by water," —but it is uncritical to restore the measure by such violent treatment.

³ Gifford and Dyce read "In's secure"

⁴ Old ed "Am basely lost in my, &c."

Sim Would it were gone,
By one means or other ¹ what a long day
Will this be ere night ¹

[*Aside*

Creon Simonides

Sim Here, sir ¹

[*Weeping* ² 250

Creon, Wherefore dost thou weep ?

Clean 'Cause you make no more haste to your end

[*Aside*

Sim How can you question nature so unjustly ?
I had a grandfather, and then had not you
True filial tears for him ?

Clean Hypocrite !

A disease of drought dry up all pity from him,
That can dissemble pity with wet eyes ¹

[*Aside*

Creon Be good unto your mother, Simonides ,
She must be now your care

Ant To what end, sir ?

The bell of this sharp edict tolls for me,
As it rings out for you — I'll be as ready,
With one hour's stay, to go along with you

260

Creon Thou must not, woman , there are years behind,
Before thou canst set forward in this voyage ,
And nature, sure, will now be kind to all
She has a quarrel in't, a cruel law
Seeks to prevent ³ her, she will therefore fight in't,

¹ Old ed " sit

² Gifford and Dyce give this as part of the text , and Gifford states that it is so printed in the old copy What the old copy gives is—

"Here sit — — — weeping

It is plain that "weeping" was intended for a stage-direction

³ "To anticipate the period she had allotted to life."—*Gifford*

It had been bought, though with your full estate,
Your life's so precious to me,—but there is none

First Law Sir, we have canvass'd her¹ from top to toe,
Turn'd her¹ upside down, threw her on her side,
Nay, open'd and dissected all her entrails,
Yet can find none there's nothing to be hop'd,
But the duke's mercy

Sim I know the hope of that,
He did not make the law for that purpose [Aside

Creon Then to his hopeless mercy last I go,
I have so many precedents before me, 300
I must call it hopeless Antigona,
See me deliver'd up unto my deathsman,
And then we'll part,—five years hence I'll look for thee

Sim I hope she'll not stay so long behind you [Aside

Creon Do not bate him an hour by grief and sorrow,
Since there's a day prefix'd, haste[n] it not
Suppose me sick, Antigona, dying now,
Any disease thou wilt may be my end,
Or when death's slow to come, say tyrants send

[*Exeunt CREON and ANTIGONA.*

Sim Cleanthes, if you want money, to-morrow use
me, 310

I'll trust you while² your father's dead

[*Exit with the Lawyers*

Clean Why, here's a villain,
Able to corrupt a thousand by example!
Does the kind root bleed out his livelihood

¹ Old ed. "it"

² Until

In parent distribution to his branches,
 Adorning them with all his glorious fruits,
 Proud that his pride is seen when he's unseen,
 And must not gratitude descend again,
 To comfort his old limbs in fruitless winter?
 Improvident, at least partial¹ nature!
 (Weak woman in this kind), who, in thy last
 Teeming,² forgets the former, ever making
 The burthen of thy last throes still the dearest
 Darling, oh yet in noble man reform it,
 And make us better than those vegetives
 Whose souls die with 'em Nature, as thou art old,
 If love and justice be not dead in thee,
 Make some the pattern of thy piety,
 Lest all do turn unnaturally against thee,
 And thou be blam'd for our oblivious

320

330

Enter LIONIDES and HIPPOLITA

And brutish reluctations! Ay, here's the ground
 Whereon my filial faculties must build

¹ For the sake of the metre, I should like to read "impartial" which is occasionally found in the sense of "unkindly." See my note, *Marlowe's Works*, ii 60

² The reading of the old edition is—

"Teeming still forgets the former ever making
 The burthen of thy last throws the dearest
 Darling, oh yet &c

The word "still" appears to have been printed in the wrong line,—an error of common occurrence. Even with this alteration the rhythm is awkward. Gifford and Dyce give—

"(Weak woman in this kind), who, in thy last teeming
 Forgettest still the former, ever making
 The burthen of thy last throes the dearest darling"

An edifice of honour, or of shame,
To all mankind

Hip You must avoid it, sir,
If there be any love within yourself
This is far more than fate of a lost game,
That another venture may restore again,
It is your life, which you should not subject
To any cruelty, if you can preserve it

Clean O dearest woman, thou hast doubled now ¹ 340
A thousand times thy nuptial dowry to me !—
Why, she whose love is but deriv'd from me,
Is got before me in my debted duty

Hip Are you thinking such a resolution, sir ?

Clean Sweetest Hippolita, what love taught thee
To be so forward in so good a cause ?

Hip Mine own pity, sir, did first instruct me,
And then your love and power did both command me

Clean They were all blessed angels to direct thee,
And take their counsel How do you fare, sir ? 350

Leon Never better, Cleanthes, I have conceiv'd
Such a new joy within this old bosom,
As I did never think would there have enter'd

Clean Joy call you it ? alas ! 'tis sorrow, sir,
The worst of sorrows, sorrow unto death

Leon Death ! what's that, Cleanthes ? I thought not
on't,

I was in contemplation of this woman
'Tis all thy comfort, son, thou hast in her

¹ Old ed "now doubled"

A treasure unvaluable, keep her safe
When I die, sure 'twill be a gentle death, 360
For I will die with wonder of her virtues,
Nothing else shall dissolve me

Clean 'Twere much better, sir,
Could you prevent their malice

Leon I'll prevent 'em,
And die the way I told thee, in the wonder
Of this good woman I tell thee there's few men
Have such a child I must thank thee for her
That the stranger¹ tie of wedlock should do more
Than nature in her nearest ligaments
Of blood and propagation¹ I should ne'er
Have begot such a daughter of my own 370
A daughter-in-law¹ law were above nature,
Were there more such children

Clean This admiration
Helps nothing to your safety think of that, sir
Leon Had you heard her, Cleanthes, but labour

In the search of means to save my forfeit life,
And knew the wise and sound preservatives²
That she found out, you would redouble all
My wonder, in your love to her

Clean The thought,
The very thought, claims all that [love] from me,
And she is now possess'd of't, but, good sir, 380

¹ Old ed "stronger" —Gifford and Dyce give "strong"

² This is my own correction (*metri causa*) of the old ed's "preservations."

If you have aught receiv'd from her advice,
Let's follow it , or else let's better think,
And take the surest course

Leon I'll tell thee one ,
She counsels me to fly my severe country ,
Turn all into treasure, and there build up
My decaying fortunes in a safer soil,
Where Epire's law cannot claim me

Clean And, sir,
I apprehend it as a safest course,
And may be easily accomplished ,
Let us be all most expeditious
Every country where we breathe will be our own,
Or better soil , heaven is the roof of all ,
And now, as Epire's situate by this law,
There is 'twixt us and heaven a dark eclipse

390

Hip O then avoid it, sir these sad events
Follow those black predictions

Leon I prithee, peace ,
I do allow¹ thy love, Hippolita,
But must not follow it as counsel, child ,
I must not shame my country for the law
This country here hath bred me, brought me up,
And shall I now refuse a grave in her?
I'm in my second infancy, and children
Ne'er sleep so sweetly in their nurse's cradle
As in their natural mother's

400

Hip Ay, but, sir,

¹ Approve

She is unnatural , then the stepmother
Is to be preferr'd before her

Leon Tush ! she shall

Allow it me despite of her entrails
Why, do you think how far from judgment 'tis,
That I should travel forth to seek a grave
That is already digg'd for me at home, 410
Nay, perhaps find it in my way to seek it?—
How have I then sought a repentant sorrow?
For your dear loves, how have I banish'd you
From your country ever? With my base attempt.
How have I beggar'd you, in wasting that
Which only for your sakes I bred together ,
Buried my name in Epire, which I built
Upon this frame, to live for ever in?
What a base coward shall I be, to fly from
That enemy which every minute meets me, 420
And thousand odds he had not long vanquish'd me
Before this hour of battle ! Fly my death !
I will not be so false unto your states,
Nor fainting to the man that's yet in me
I'll meet him bravely , I cannot (this knowing) fear
That, when I am gone hence, I shall be there ¹
Come, I have days of preparation left

Clean Good sir, hear me

I have a genius that has prompted me,

¹ Gifford says — "The conclusion of this speech I do not understand
Should we read "here, and understand by the passage—" I cannot
doubt but that, after my death my name will live among my country-
men ? Cf 1 417, "Buried my name in Epire " &c

And I have almost form'd it into words— 430

'Tis done, pray you observe 'em, I can conceal you,

And yet not leave your country

Leon Tush! it cannot be,

Without a certain peril on us all

Clean Danger must be hazarded, rather than
accept

A sure destruction You have a lodge, sir, .

So far remote from way of passengers,

That seldom any mortal eye does greet with't,

And yet¹ so sweetly situate with thickets,

Built with such cunning labyrinths within,

As if the provident heavens, foreseeing cruelty, 440

Had bid you frame it to this purpose only

Leon Fie, fie! 'tis dangerous—and treason too,
To abuse the law

Hip 'Tis holy care, sir,

Of your dear life, which is your own to keep,

But not your own to lose, either in will

Or negligence

Clean Call you it treason, sir?

I had been then a traitor unto you,

Had I forgot this, beseech you, accept of it,

It is secure, and a duty to yourself

Leon What a coward will you make me!

Clean You mistake, 450

'Tis noble courage now you fight with death,

And yield not to him till you stoop under him

¹ Old ed "yes"

Leon This must needs open to discovery,
And then what torture follows ¹

Clean By what means, sir?
Why, there is but one body in all this counsel,
Which cannot betray itself we two are one,
One soul, one body, one heart, think all one ¹ thought,
And yet we two are not completely one,
But as [I] have deriv'd myself from you —
Who shall betray us where there is no second? 460

Hip You must not mistrust my faith, though my sex
plead
Weak[ness] and frailty for me

Leon O I dare not ¹
But where's the means that must make answer for me?
I cannot be lost without a full account,
And what must pay that reckoning?

Clean O sir, we will
Keep solemn obits for your funeral,
We'll seem to weep, and seem to joy withal,
That death so gently has prevented you
The law's sharp rigour, and this no mortal ear shall
Participate the knowledge of

Leon Ha, ha, ha ¹ 470
This will be a sportive fine demur,
If the error be not found

Clean Pray doubt of none
Your company and best provision,
Must be no further furnish'd than by us

¹ Old ed. ' that think all

And, in the interim, your solitude may
Converse with heaven, and fairly prepare
[For that] which was too violent and raging
Thrown headlong on you

Leon Still, there are some doubts
Of the discovery, yet I do allow't

Hip Will you not mention now the cost and charge 480
Which will be in your keeping ?

Leon That will be somewhat,
Which you might save too

Clean With his will against him,
What foe is more to man than man himself?
Are you resolved, sir ?

Leon I am, Cleanthes
If by this means I do get a reprieve,
And cozen death awhile, when he shall come
Armed in his own power to give the blow,
I'll smile upon him then, and laughing go [Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I

Before the Palace

Enter EVANDER, three Courtiers, and CRATILUS

Evan Executioner¹

Crat My lord

Evan How did old Diocles take his death?

Crat As weeping brides receive their joys at night,¹
With trembling, yet with patience

Evan Why, 'twas well

First Court Nay, I knew my father would do well,
my lord,

Whene'er he came to die, I'd that opinion of him,
Which made me the more willing to part from him,
He was not fit to live i'the world, indeed,
Any time these ten years, my lord,
But I would not say so much

10

Evan No! you did not well in't,
For he that's all spent is ripe for death at all hours,
And does but trifle time out

¹ Old ed. " at night, my lord "

First Court Troth, my lord,
I would I had known your mind nine years ago

Evan Our law is fourscore years, because we judge
Dotage complete then, as unfruitfulness
In women at threescore, marry, if the son
Can, within compass, bring good solid proofs
Of his own father's weakness, and unfitness
To live, or sway the living, though he want five 20
Or ten years of his number, that's not it,
His defect makes him fourscore, and 'tis fit
He dies when he deserves, for every act
Is in effect then, when the cause is ripe

Second Court An admirable prince! how rarely he
talks!
O that we'd known this, lads! What a time did we
endure

In two-penny commons, and in boots twice vamp'd!¹

First Court Now we have two pair a week, and yet
not thankful,

'Twill be a fine world for them, sirs, that come after us

Second Court Ay, and² they knew't

First³ Court Peace, let them never know't 30

Thurd Court A pox, there be young heirs will soon
smell't out

Second Court 'Twill come to 'em by instinct, man
May your grace

Never be old, you stand so well for youth!

¹ Cobbled

³ Old ed. "2"

² If

Evan Why now, methinks, our court looks like a
spring,
Sweet, fresh, and fashionable, now the old weeds are
gone

First Court 'Tis as a court should be
Gloss and good clothes, my lord, no matter for merit,
And herein your law proves a provident act,¹
When men pass not the palsy of their tongues,
Nor colour in their cheeks

Evan But women, 40
By that law, should live long, for they're ne'er past it

First Court It will have heats though, when they see
the painting
Go an inch deep i' the wrinkle, and take up
A box more than their gossips but for men, my lord,
That should be the sole bravery of a palace,
To walk with hollow eyes and long white beards,
As if a prince dwelt in a land of goats,
With clothes as if they sat on² their backs on purpose
To arraign a fashion, and condemn't to exile,
Their pockets in their sleeves, as if they laid 50
Their ear to avarice, and heard the devil whisper '
Now ours lie downward, here, close to the flank,
Right spending pockets, as a son's should be
'That lives i' the fashion where our diseas'd fathers,
Worried³ with the sciatica and aches,

¹ Old ed "act, my lord

² Old ed "upon "

³ So Gifford for the old eds "Would" Dyce follows Mason's correction "Wood" (i.e. "mad")

Brought up your pan'd ¹ hose first, which ladies laugh'd
at,

Giving no reverence to the place lies ruin'd
They love a doublet that's three hours a buttoning,
And sits so close makes a man groan again,
And his soul mutter half a day, yet these are those 60
That carry sway and worth, prick'd up in clothes,
Why should we fear our rising?

Evan You but wrong
Our kindness, and your own deserts, to doubt on't
Has not our law made you rich before your time?
Our countenance then can make you honourable

First Court We'll spare for no cost, sir, to appear
worthy

Evan Why, you're i' the noble way then, for the most
Are but appearers, worth itself is lost,
And bravery ² stands for't

Enter CREON, ANTIGONA, and SIMONIDES

First Court Look, look, who comes here!
I smell death, and another courtier, 70
Simonides

Second Court Sim!

Sim Push! ³ I'm not for you yet,
Your company's too costly, after the old man's
Despatch'd, I shall have time to talk with you,
I shall come into the fashion, ye shall see too,

¹ Breeches with *panes* or stripes of coloured cloth inserted

² Finery

³ The old form of "Push"

After a day or two , in the meantime,
I am not for your company

Evan Old Creon, you have been expected long ,
Sure you're above fourscore

Sim Upon my life,
Not four-and-twenty hours, my lord , I search'd
The church-book yesterday Does your grace think 80
I'd let my father wrong the law, my lord ?
'Twere pity a' my life then ' no, your act
Shall not receive a minute's wrong by him,
While I live, sir , and he's so just himself too,
I know he would no[t] offer't —here he stands

Creon 'Tis just
I die, indeed, my lord , for I confess
I'm troublesome to life now, and the state
Can hope for nothing worthy from me now,
Either in force or counsel , I've a' late 90
Employ'd myself quite from the world, and he
That once begins to serve his Maker faithfully
Can never serve a worldly prince well after ,
'Tis clean another way

Ant O, give not confidence
To all he speaks, my lord, in his own injury
His preparation only for the next world
Makes him talk widely, to his wrong, of this ,
He is not lost in judgment

Sim She spoils all again [Aside

Ant Deserving any way for state employment

Sim Mother—— 100

Ant His very household laws prescribed at home by
him

Are able to conform seven Christian kingdoms,
They are so wise and virtuous

Sim Mother, I say——

Ant I know your laws extend not to desert, sir,
But to unnecessary years, and, my lord,
His are not such, though they show white, they're
worthy,

Judicious, able, and religious

Sim I'll help you to a courtier of nineteen, mother

Ant Away, unnatural !

Sim Then I am no fool, I'm sure,
For to be natural at such a time 110
Were a fool's part indeed

Ant Your grace's pity, sir,
And 'tis but fit and just

Crcon The law, my lord,
And that's the justest way

Sim Well said, father, i'faith !
Thou wert ever juster than my mother still

Evan Come hither, sir

Sim My lord

Evan What are those orders?

Ant Worth observation, sir,
So please you hear them read

Sim The woman speaks she knows not what, my
lord

He make a law, poor man ! he bought a table, indeed,
Only to learn to die by't, there's the business, now, 120

Wherein there are some precepts for a son too,
How he should learn to live, but I ne'er look'd upon't
For, when he's dead, I shall live well enough,
And keep a better table¹ than that, I trow

Evan And is that all, sir?

Sim All, I vow, my lord,
Save a few running admonitions
Upon cheese-trenchers,² as—

Take heed of whoring, shun it,

'Tis like a cheese too strong of the runnet

And such calves' maws of wit and admonition, 130

Good to catch mice with, but not sons and heirs,

They're not so easily caught

Evan Agent for death!

Crat Your will, my lord?

Evan Take hence that pile of years
Before [he] surfeit³ with unprofitable age,
And, with the rest from the high promontory,
Cast him into the sea

Creon 'Tis noble justice!

[*Exit CRATILUS with CREON*]

Ant 'Tis cursed tyranny!

¹ ' This wretched fellow is punning upon the word *table* which as applied to his father, meant a large sheet of paper, where precepts for the due regulation of life were set down in distinct lines, and as applied to himself—that he would keep a better house, &c. live more sumptuously, than his father '—*Gifford*

² Old authors frequently allude to the practice of inscribing posies on cheese-trenchers See Middleton's *No Wit, No Help like a Woman's*, II. 1

³ Gifford reads "Forfeit before," which Dyce (though "not quite satisfied") adopts

Sim Peace ! take heed, mother ,
You've but a short time to be cast down yourself ,
And let a young courtier do't, and you be wise,
In the meantime

Ant Hence, slave !

Sim Well, seven-and-fifty, 140
You've but three years to scold, then comes your pay-
ment [Exit ANTIGONA]

First Court Simonides

Sim Push, I'm not brave enough to hold you talk
yet ,
Give a man time , I have a suit a making

Second Court We love thy form first , brave clothes
will come, man

Sim I'll make 'em come else, with a mischief to 'em,
As other gallants do, that have less left 'em

[Recorders within]

Evan Hark ! whence those sounds ? what's that ?

First Court Some funeral,
It seems, my lord , and young Cleanthes follows

Enter¹ a funeral procession , the hearse followed by
CLEANTHES and HIPPOLITA gaily dressed

Evan Cleanthes !

Second Court 'Tis, my lord, and in the place 150
Of a chief mourner too, but strangely habited

Evan Yet suitable to his behaviour , mark it ,

¹ Old ed ' *Enter Cleanthes and Hippolita with a hearse* '

He comes all the way smiling, do you observ't?
I never saw a corse so joyfully follow'd
Light colours and light cheeks¹ who should this be?
'Tis a thing worth resolving

Sim One, belike,

That doth participate this¹ our present joy

Evan Cleanthes

Clean O my lord¹

Evan He laugh'd outright now,
Was ever such a contrariety seen
In natural courses yet, nay, profess'd openly?¹⁶⁰

First Court I ha' known a widow laugh closely, my
lord,

Under her handkercher, when t'other part
Of her old face has wept like rain in sunshine,
But all the face to laugh apparently,
Was never seen yet

Sim Yes, mine did once

Clean 'Tis, of a heavy time, the joyfull'st day
That ever son was born to

Evan How can that be?

Clean I joy to make it plain,—my father's dead

Evan Dead¹

Second Court Old Leonides¹

Clean In his last month dead
He beguil'd cruel law the sweetliest¹⁷⁰
'That ever age was blest to ——
It grieves me that a tear should fall upon't,

¹ Old ed "in this

Being a thing so joyful, but his memory
Will work it out, I see when his poor heart broke,
I did not [do] so much but leap'd for joy
So mountingly, I touch'd the stars, methought,
I would not hear of blacks,¹ I was so light,
But chose a colour orient like my mind,
For blacks are often such dissembling mourners,
There is no credit given to't, it has lost 180
All reputation by false sons and widows
Now I would have men know what I resemble,
A truth, indeed, 'tis joy clad like a joy,
Which is more honest than a cunning grief,
'That's only fac'd with sables for a show,
But gawdy-hearted When I saw death come
So ready to deceive you, sir,—forgive me,
I could not choose but be entirely merry,
And yet to see now '—of a sudden,
Naming but death, I show myself a mortal, 190
'That's never constant to one passion long
I wonder whence that tear came, when I smil'd
In the production on't 'sorrow's a thief,
That can, when joy looks on, steal forth a grief
But, gracious leave, my lord, when I've perform'd
My last poor duty to my father's bones,
I shall return your servant

Evan Well, perform it,
The law is satisfied, they can but die
And by his death, Cleanthes, you gain well,

¹ Mourning garments

A rich and fair revenue

[*Flourish* *Exeunt* DUKE, Courtiers, &c

Sim I would I had e'en 200

Another father, condition he did the like

Clean I have past it bravely now , how blest was I

To have the duke¹ in sight ' now 'tis confirmed,

Past fear or doubts confirm'd on, on, I say,

He that brought me to man, I bring to clay

[*Exit funeral procession, followed by* CLEAN-
IHES and HIPPOITA

Sim I'm rapt now in a contemplation,

Even at the very sight of yonder hearse ,

I do but think what a fine thing 'tis now

To live, and follow some seven uncles thus,

As many cousin-germans, and such people, 210

That will leave legacies , a pox ' I'd see 'em hang'd else,

Ere I'd follow one of them, and ² they could find the way

Now I've enough to begin to be horrible covetous

Enter Butler, Tailor, Bailiff,³ Cook, Coachman, and
Footman

But We come to know your worship's pleasure, sir,
Having long serv'd your father, how your good will
Stands towards our entertainment

Sim Not a jot, i'faith ,
My father wore cheap garments, he might do't ,

¹ Mason's certain correction for " To have the d.m sight " I the MS
probably had, as Gifford suggests, " the d in sight "

² If

³ Old ed ' Bavly

I shall have all my clothes come home to-morrow ,
They will eat up all you, and ¹ there were more of you,
sirs

To keep you six at livery, and still munching ! 220

Tail Why, I'm a tailor , you've most need of me, sir.

Sim Thou mad'st my father's clothes, that I confess ,
But what son and heir will have his father's tailor,
Unless he have a mind to be well laugh'd at ?
Thou'st been so used to wide long-side things, that when
I come to truss, I shall have the waist of my doublet
Lie upon my buttocks, a sweet sight !

But I a butler

Sim There's least need of thee, fellow , I shall ne'er
drink at home, I shall be so drunk abroad 230

But But a cup of small beer will do well next morn-
ing, sir

Sim I grant you , but what need I keep so big a
knave for a cup of small beer ?

Cook Butler, you have your answer Marry, sir, a cook
I know your mastership cannot be without

Sim The more ass art thou to think so , for what
should I do with a mountebank, no drink in my house ?
—the banishing the butler might have been a warning
for thee, unless thou meanest to choke me 240

Cook I' the meantime you have chok'd me, methinks

Bail These are superfluous vanities, indeed,
And so accounted of in these days, sir ,
But then, your bailiff to receive your rents——

Sim I prithee, hold thy tongue, fellow, I shall take a course to spend 'em faster than thou canst reckon 'em, 'tis not the rents must serve my turn, unless I mean to be laughed at, if a man should be seen out of slash-me, let him ne'er look to be a right gallant But, sirrah, with whom is your business? 250

Coach Your good mastership

Sim You have stood silent all this while, like men

That know their strengths i'these days, none of you
Can want employment, you can win me wagers,
Footman, in running races

Foot I dare boast it, sir

Sim And when my bets are all come in, and store,
Then, coachman, you can hurry me to my whore

Coach I'll firk 'em into foam else

Sim Speaks brave matter
And I'll firk some too, or't shall cost hot water

[*Exeunt* SIMONIDES, Coachman, and Footman

Cook Why, here's an age to make a cook a ruffian, 260
And scald the devil indeed¹ do strange mad things,
Make mutton-pasties of dog's flesh,
Bake snakes for lamprey-pies, and cats for conies

But Come, will you be ruled by a butler's advice
once? for we must make up our fortunes somewhere now,
as the case stands, let's e'en, therefore, go seek out
widows of nine-and-fifty, and¹ we can, that's within a
year of their deaths, and so we shall be sure to be quickly

¹ If

rld of 'em , for a year's enough of conscience to be
troubled with a wife, for any man living 270

Cook Oracle butler ! oracle butler ! he puts down all
the doctors a' the name ¹ [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Room in CREON'S House

Enter EUGENIA and PARTHENIA

Eug Parthenia

Parth Mother

Eug I shall be troubled

This six months with an old clog , would the law
Had been cut one year shorter !

Parth Did you call, forsooth ?

Eug Yes, you must make some spoonmeat for your
father,

And warm three nightcaps for him [*Exit PARTHENIA*
Out upon't

The mere conceit turns a young woman's stomach
His slippers must be warm'd, in August too,
And his gown girt to him in the very dog-days,
When every mastiff lolls out's tongue for heat

¹ The allusion is to Dr William Butler, a famous Elizabethan physician, who (in the words of Fuller) "quickened Galenical physic with a touch of Paracelsus, trading in chymical receipts with great success. He was very slovenly in his dress and eccentric in his manners. He died in 1618 at the age of eighty two, and was buried in St Mary's Church, Cambridge

Would not this vex a beauty of nineteen now? 10
Alas! I should ¹ be tumbling in cold baths now,
Under each armpit a fine bean-flower bag,
To screw out whiteness when I list—
And some seven of the properest men i'the dukedom
Making a banquet ready i'the next room for me,
Where he that gets the first kiss is envied,
And stands upon his guard a fortnight after
This is a life for nineteen! 'tis but justice
For old men, whose great acts stand in their minds,
And nothing in their bodies, do ne'er think 20
A woman young enough for their desire,
And we young wenches, that have mother-wits,
And love to marry muck first, and man after,
Do never think old men are old enough,
That we may soon be rid on 'em, there's our quittance
I've waited for the happy hour this two year,
And, if death be so unkind to let ² him live still,
All that time I have ³ lost

Enter Courtiers

First Court Young lady!

Second Court O sweet precious bud of beauty!

Troth, she smells over all the house, methinks 30

First Court. The sweetbriar's but a counterfeit to
her——

¹ Old ed "shall"

² Old ed "still to let him live"

³ So Gifford, old ed "am"

It does exceed you only in the prickle,
But that it shall not long, if you'll be rul'd, lady

Eug What means this sudden visitation, gentlemen?
So passing well perfum'd¹ too! who's your milliner?

First Court Love, and thy beauty, widow

Eug Widow, sir!

First Court 'Tis sure, and that's as good in troth,
we're suitors,

We come a wooing, wench, plain dealing's best

Eug A wooing! what, before my husband's dead?

Second Court Let's lose no time, six months will
have an end, you know, 40

I know't by all the bonds that e'er I made yet

Eug That's a sure knowledge, but it holds not here,
sir

First Court Do not we know the craft of you young²
tumblers?

That [when] you wed an old man, you think upon

Another husband as you are marrying of him,—

We, knowing your thoughts, made bold to see you

Enter SIMONIDES richly drest, and Coachman

Eug How wondrous right he speaks! 'twas my thought,
indeed

Sim By your leave, sweet widow, do you lack any
gallants?

Eug Widow, again! 'tis a comfort to be call'd so

¹ So Gifford, old ed "perform'd"

² Old ed "you know your young"

First Court Who's this? Simonides?

Second Court Brave Sim, i'faith! 50

Sim. Coachman!

Coach Sir

Sim Have an especial care of my new mares
They say, sweet widow, he that loves a horse well,
Must needs love a widow well — When dies thy husband?
Is't not July next?

Eug O, you're too hot, sir!

Pray cool yourself, and take September with you

Sim September! O, I was but two bows wide

First Court Mr Simonides

Sim I can entreat you, gallants, I'm in fashion too 60

Enter LYSANDER

Lys Ha! whence this herd of folly? what are you?

Sim Well-willers to your wife pray, 'tend your book,
sir,

We've nothing to say to you, you may go die,
For here be those in place that can supply

Lys What's thy wild business here?

Sim Old man, I'll tell thee,
I come to beg the reversion of thy wife
I think these gallants be of my mind too —
But thou art but a dead man, therefore what should a
man do talking with thee? Come, widow, stand to your
tackling 70

Lys Impious blood-hounds!

Sim Let the ghost talk, ne'er mind him

Lys. Shames of nature!

Sim Alas, poor ghost ! consider what the man is

Lys Monsters unnatural ! you that have been covetous
Of your own fathers' deaths, gape ye for mine now ?

Cannot a poor old man, that now can reckon

E'en all the hours he has to live, live quiet,

For such wild beasts as these, that neither hold

A certainty of good within themselves, 80

But scatter others' comforts that are ripen'd

For holy uses ? is hot youth so hasty,

It will not give an old man leave to die,

And leave a widow first, but will make one,

The husband looking on ? May your destructions

Come all in hasty figures to your souls !

Your wealth depart in haste, to overtake

Your honesties, that died when you were infants !

May your male seed be hasty spendthrifts too,

Your daughters hasty sinners, and diseases'd 90

Ere they be thought at years to welcome misery !

And may you never know what leisure is,

But at repentance !—I am too uncharitable,

Too foul , I must go cleanse myself with prayers

These are the plagues of fondness to old men,

We're punish'd home with what we dote upon [Exit

Sim So, so !

The ghost is vanish'd now, your answer, lady

Eug Excuse me, gentlemen , 'twere as much impudence

In me to give you a kind answer yet, 100

As madness to produce a churlish one

I could say now, come a month hence, sweet gentlemen,

Or two, or three, or when you will, indeed ,
But I say no such thing I set no time,
Nor is it mannerly to deny any
I'll carry an even hand to all the world
Let other women make what haste they will,
What's that to me? but I profess unfeignedly,
I'll have my husband dead before I marry ,
Ne'er look for other answer at my hands, gentlemen 110

Sim Would he were hanged, for my part, looks for
other !

Eug I'm at a word

Sim And I am at a blow then ,

I'll lay you o' the lips, and leave you [Kisses her

First Court Well struck, *Sim*

Sim He that dares say he'll mend it, I'll strike him

First Court He would betray himself to be a botcher,¹
That goes about to mend it

Eug Gentlemen,

You know my mind , I bar you not my house

But if you choose out hours more seasonably,

You may have entertainment

Re-enter PARTHENIA

Sim What will she do hereafter, when she's a widow,
Keeps open house already?

[*Exeunt SIMONIDES and Courtiers*

Eug How now, girl !

121

¹ Old ed " brother

Parth. Those feather'd fools that hither took their flight
Have griev'd my father much

Eug Speak well of youth, wench,
While thou'st a day to live, 'tis youth must make thee,
And when youth fails, wise women will make it,
But always take age first, to make thee rich
That was my counsel ever, and then youth
Will make thee sport enough all thy life after
'Tis [the] time's policy, wench, what is't to bide
A little hardness for a pair of years, or so? 130
A man whose only strength lies in his breath,
Weakness in all parts else, thy bedfellow,
A cough o' the lungs, or say a wheezing¹ matter,
Then shake off chains, and dance all thy life after?

Parth Every one to their liking, but I say
An honest man's worth all, be he young or gray
Yonder's my cousin [Exit

Enter HIPPOLITA

Eug Art, I must use thee now,
Dissembling is the best help for a virtue,
That ever women had, it saves their credit oft²

Hip How now, cousin¹ 140
What, weeping?

Eug Can you blame me, when the time
Of my dear love and husband now draws on?

¹ Old ed " wheening "

² Old ed " Often "

I study funeral tears against the day

I must be a sad widow

Hip In troth, Eugenia, I have cause to weep too .
But, when I visit, I come comfortably,
And look to be so quited —yet more sobbing ?

Eug Oh ! the greatest part of your affliction's past,
The worst of mine's to come , I have one to die ,
Your husband's father is dead, and fix'd in his 150
Eternal peace, past the sharp tyrannous blow

Hip You must use patience, coz

Eug Tell me of patience !

Hip You have example for't, in me and many

Eug Yours was a father-in-law, but mine a husband
O, for a woman that could love, and live
With an old man, mine is a jewel, cousin ,
So quietly he lies by one, so still !

Hip Alas ! I have a secret lodg'd within me,
Which now will out in pity —I can't hold [*Aside*

Eug One that will not disturb me in my sleep 160
For¹ a whole month together, 'less it be
With those diseases age is subject to,
As aches, coughs, and pains, and these, heaven knows.
Against his will too —he's the quietest man,
Especially in bed

Hip Be comforted

Eug How can I, lady ? None knows the terror of
An husband's loss, but they that fear to lose him

Hip Fain would I keep it in, but 'twill not be ,

¹ Old ed " After "

She is my kinswoman, and I'm pitiful
I must impart a good, if I know't once, 170
To them that stand in need on't, I'm like one
Loves not to banquet with a joy alone,
My friends must partake too [*Aside*]—Prithee, cease,
cousin,

If your love be so boundless, which is rare,
In a young woman, in these days, I tell you,
To one so much past service as your husband,
There is a way to beguile law, and help you,
My husband found it out first

Eug O sweet cousin !

Hip You may conceal him, and give out his death
Within the time, order his funeral too, 180
We had it so for ours, I praise heaven for't,
And he's alive and safe

Eug O blessed coz,
How thou revivest me !

Hip We daily see
The good old man, and feed him twice a day
Methinks, it is the sweetest joy to cherish him,
That ever life yet show'd me

Eug So should I think,
A dainty thing to nurse an old man well !

Hip And then we have his prayers and daily blessing,
And we two live so lovingly upon't,
His son and I, and so contentedly, 190
You cannot think unless you tasted on't

Eug No, I warrant you O loving cousin,
What a great sorrow hast thou eas'd me of !

A thousand thanks go with thee !

Hyp. I have a suit to you,

I must not have you weep when I am gone [Exit

Eug. No, if I do, ne'er trust me Easy fool,

Thou hast put thyself into my power for ever ,

Take heed of angering of me I conceal !

I feign a funeral ! I keep my husband !

'Las ! I've been thinking any time these two years, 200

I have kept him too long already —

I'll go count o'er my suitors, that's my business,

And prick the man down , I ha' six months to do't,

But could despatch't¹ in one, were I put to't [Exit

¹ Old ed " dispatch him "

ACT III

SCENE I

Before the Church

Enter GNO1HO and Clerk

Gnoth You have searched o'er the parish chronicle,
sir ?

Clerk Yes, sir , I have found out the true age and
date of the party you wot on

Gnoth Pray you, be covered, sir

Clerk When you have showed me the way, sir

Gnoth O sir, remember yourself, you are a clerk

Clerk. A small clerk, sir

Gnoth Likely to be the wiser man, sir , for your
greatest clerks are not always so, as 'tis reported 10

Clerk You are a great man in the parish, sir

Gnoth I understand myself so much the better, sir ,
for all the best in the parish pay duties to the clerk, and
I would owe you none, sir

Clerk Since you'll have it so, I'll be the first to hide
my head

Gnoth Mine is a capcase now to our business in¹
hand Good luck, I hope, I long to be resolved

Clerk Look you, sir, this is that cannot deceive you
This is the dial that goes ever true, 20
You may say *ipse dixit* upon this witness,
And 'tis good in law too

Gnoth Pray you, let's hear what it speaks

Clerk Mark, sir—*Agatha, the daughter of Pollux*,
(this is your wife's name, and the name of her father,)
born——

Gnoth Whose daughter, say you?

Clerk The daughter of Pollux

Gnoth I take it his name was Bollux

Clerk Pollux the orthography I assure you, sir, the
word is corrupted else 31

Gnoth Well, on, sir,—of Pollux, now come on,
Castor

Clerk *Born in an* 1540, and now 'tis 99 By this
infallible record, sir, (let me see,) she is now just fifty-
nine, and wants but one

Gnoth I am sorry she wants so much

Clerk Why, sir? alas, 'tis nothing, 'tis but so many
months, so many weeks, so many——

Gnoth Do not deduct it to days, 'twill be the more
tedious, and to measure it by hour-glasses were intoler-
able 42

Clerk Do not think on it, sir, half the time goes
away in sleep, 'tis half the year in nights

¹ Old ed. "in your hand

Gnoth. O, you mistake me, neighbour, I am loath to leave the good old woman, if she were gone now it would not grieve me, for what is a year, alas, but a lingering torment? and were it not better she were out of her pain? 'T must needs be a grief to us both

50

Clerk I would I knew how to ease you, neighbour!

Gnoth You speak kindly, truly, and it you say but Amen to it, (which is a word that I know you are perfect in,) it might be done. Clerks are the most indifferent honest men,—for to the marriage of your enemy, or the burial of your friend, the curses or the blessings to you are all one, you say Amen to all

Clerk With a better will to the one than the other, neighbour but I shall be glad to say Amen to anything might do you a pleasure

60

Gnoth There is, first, something above your duty [*gives him money*] now I would have you set forward the clock a little, to help the old woman out of her pain.

Clerk I will speak to the sexton,¹ but the day will go ne'er the faster for that.

Gnoth O, neighbour, you do not conceit me, not the jack² of the clock-house, the hand of the dial, I mean—Come, I know you, being a great clerk, cannot choose but have the art to cast a figure

Clerk Never, indeed, neighbour I never had the judgment to cast a figure

71

¹ Old ed "sexton for that"

² The figure that struck the bell of the clock

Gnoth I'll show you on the back side of your book, look you,—what figure's this?

Clerk. Four with a cipher, that's forty.

Gnoth. So! forty, what's this now?

Clerk The cipher is turned into 9 by adding the tail, which makes forty-nine

Gnoth Very well understood, what is't now?

Clerk The 4 is turned into 3, 'tis now thirty-nine

Gnoth Very well understood, and can you do this again? 81

Clerk O, easily, sir

Gnoth A wager of that! let me see the place of my wife's age again

Clerk Look you, sir, 'tis here, 1540

Gnoth Forty drachmas, you do not turn that forty into thirty-nine

Clerk A match with you

Gnoth Done! and you shall keep stakes yourself, there they are 90

Clerk A firm match—but stay, sir, now I consider it, I shall add a year to your wife's age, let me see—*Scirophorion* the 17,—and now 'tis *Hecatombaion* the 11¹ If I alter this, your wife will have but a month to live by the law.

¹ Old ed. "Scirophon Hecitombaion"—"Scirophorion, Hecatombaion, and, soon after, December, what a medley!" This miserable ostentation of Greek literature is, I believe, from the pen of Middleton, who was 'a piece' of a scholar"—*Gifford* Dyce remarks that the Grecian months "were formerly not unfamiliar to the vulgar, see for instance the last page of Ponds Almanac, 1610 (where are also given the Hebrew and Egyptian months)

Gnoth That's all one, sir, either do it, or pay me my wager

Clerk Will you lose your wife before you lose your wager?

Gnoth A man may get two wives before half so much money by 'em, will you do't? 101

Clerk I hope you will conceal me, for 'tis flat corruption

Gnoth Nay, sir, I would have you keep counsel, for I lose my money by't, and should be laughed at for my labour, if it should be known

Clerk Well, sir, there '—'tis done, as perfect 39 as can be found in black and white but mum, sir,—there's danger in this figure-casting

Gnoth Ay, sir, I know that better men than you have been thrown over the bar for as little, the best is, you can be but thrown out of the belfry 112

Enter the Cook, Tailor, Bailiff, and Butler

Clerk Lock close, here comes company, asses have ears as well as pitchers

Cook O *Gnotho*,¹ how is't? here's a trick of discarded cards of us! we were ranked with coats,² as long as our old master lived

Gnoth And is this then the end of serving-men?³

Cook Yes, 'faith, this is the end of serving-men a

¹ Old ed. "*Gnothos*"

² Court cards

³ An allusion to the old ballad

wise man were better serve one God than all the men in the world. 121

Gnoth 'Twas well spoke¹ of a cook. And are all fallen into fasting-days and Ember-weeks, that cooks are out of use ?

Tail And all tailors will be cut into lists and shreds, if this world hold, we shall grow both out of request

But And why not butlers as well as tailors ? if they can go naked, let 'em neither eat nor drink

Clerk. That's strange, methinks, a lord should turn away his tailor, of all men —and how dost thou, tailor ?

Tail I do so, so, but, indeed, all our wants are long of this publican, my lord's bailiff, for had he been rent-gatherer still, our places had held together still, that are now seam-rent, nay, cracked in the whole piece 134

Bail Sir, if my lord had not sold his lands that claim his rents, I should still have been the rent-gatherer

Cook The truth is, except the coachman and the footman, all serving-men are out of request

Gnoth Nay, say not so, for you were never in more request than now, for requesting is but a kind of a begging, for when you say, I beseech your worship's charity, 'tis all one [as] if you say, I request it, and in that kind of requesting, I am sure serving-men were never in more request 144

Cook Troth, he says true well, let that pass, we are upon a better adventure I see, Gnotho,² you have been

¹ Old ed "spak

² Old ed "Gnothos

before us , we came to deal with this merchant for some commodities

Clerk With me, sir? anything that I can.

But Nay, we have looked out our wives already marry, to you we come to know the prices, that is, to know their ages , for so much reverence we bear to age, that the more aged, they shall be the more dear to us

Tail The truth is, every man has laid by his widow , so they be lame enough, blind enough, and old [enough], 'tis good enough 156

Clerk I keep the town-stock , if you can but name 'em, I can tell their ages to [a] day

All We can tell their fortunes to an hour, then.

Clerk Only you must pay for turning of the leaves.

Cook O, bountifully —Come, mine first.

But The butler before the cook, while you live , there's few that eat before they drink in a morning

Tail Nay, then the tailor puts in his needle of priority, for men do clothe themselves before they either drink or eat 166

Bail I will strive for no place , the longer ere I marry my wife, the older she will be, and nearer her end and my ends

Clerk I will serve you all, gentlemen, if you will have patience 171

Gnoth I commend your modesty, sir , you are a bailiff, whose place is to come behind other men, as it were in the bum of all the rest

Bail So, sir! and you were about this business too, seeking out for a widow?

Gnoth Alack ! no, sir , I am a married man, and have those cares upon me that you would fain run into

Bail. What, an old rich wife ! any man in this age desires such a care

Gnoth 'Troth, sir, I'll put a venture with you, if you will ; I have a lusty old quean to my wife, sound of wind and limb, yet I'll give out to take three for one at the marriage of my second wife 184

Bail. Ay, sir, but how near is she to the law ?

Gnoth Take that at hazard, sir , there must be time, you know, to get a new Unsight, unseen, I take three to one

Bail Two to one I'll give, if she have but two teeth in her head

Gnoth A match , there's five drachmas for ten at my next wife 192

Bail A match

Cook I shall be fitted bravely , fifty-eight and upwards, 'tis but a year and a half, and I may chance make friends, and beg a year of the duke

But Hey, boys ! I am made sir butler , my wife that shall be wants but two months of her time , it shall be one ere I marry her, and then the next will be a honeymoon. 200

Tail I outstrip you all , I shall have but six weeks of Lent, if I get my widow, and then comes eating-tide, plump and gorgeous

Gnoth This tailor will be a man, if ever there were any

Bail Now comes my turn, I hope, goodman Finis, you that are still at the end of all, with a *so be it* Well

now, sirs, do you venture there as I have done , and I'll venture here after you Good luck, I beseech thee !

Clerk Amen, sir

Bail That deserves a fee already—there 'tis , please me, and have a better 211

Clerk Amen, sir

Cook How, two for one at your next wife ! is the old one living ?

Gnoth You have a fair match, I offer you no foul one ; if death make not haste to call her, she'll make none to go to him

But I know her, she's a lusty woman , I'll take the venture

Gnoth There's five drachmas for ten at my next wife.

But A bargain 221

Cook Nay, then we'll be all merchants give me.

Tail And me

But What has the bailiff sped ?

Bail I am content , but none of you shall know my happiness

Clerk. As well as any of you all, believe it, sir

Bail O, clerk, you are to speak last always

Clerk I'll remember't hereafter, sir You have done with me, gentlemen ?

Enter AGATHA.

All For this tune, honest register 231

Clerk Fare you well then , if you do, I'll cry Amen to't [Exit

Cook Look you, sir, is not this your wife ?

Gnoth My first wife, sir

But Nay, then we have made a good match on't, if she have no froward disease, the woman may live this dozen years by her age

Tail I'm afraid she's broken-winded, she holds silence so long

Cook We'll now leave our venture to the event; I must a wooing 242

But I'll but buy me a new dagger, and overtake you

Bail So we must all, for he that goes a wooing to a widow without a weapon, will never get her

[*Exeunt all but GNOOTH and AGATHA*]

Gnoth O wife, wife !

Agath What ail you, man, you speak so passionately ?¹

Gnoth 'Tis for thy sake, sweet wife who would think so lusty an old woman, with reasonable good teeth, and her tongue in as perfect use as ever it was, should be so near her time?—but the Fates will have it so. 251

Agath What's the matter, man ? you do amaze me

Gnoth Thou art not sick neither, I warrant thee

Agath Not that I know of, sure

Gnoth What pity 'tis a woman should be so near her end, and yet not sick !

Agath Near her end, man ! tush, I can guess at that, I have years good yet of life in the remainder, I want two yet at least of the full number, Then the law, I know, craves impotent and useless, 260 And not the able women

¹ Sorrowfully

Gnoth Ay, alas ! I see thou hast been repairing time as well as thou couldst , the old wrinkles are well filled up, but the vermilion is seen too thick, too thick—and I read what's written in thy forehead , it agrees with the church-book

Aga Have you sought my age, man ? and, I prithee, how is it ?

Gnoth I shall but discomfort thee

Aga Not at all, man , when there's no remedy, I will go, though unwillingly 271

Gnoth 1539 Just , it agrees with the book · you have about a year to prepare yourself

Aga Out, alas ! I hope there's more than so But do you not think a reprieve might be gotten for half a score—and 'twere but five year, I would not care ? an able woman, methinks, were to be pitied

Gnoth Ay, to be pitied, but not helped , no hope of that for, indeed, women have so blemished their own reputations now-a-days, that it is thought the law will meet them at fifty very shortly 281

Aga Marry, the heavens forbid !

Gnoth There's so many of you, that, when you are old, become witches , some profess physic, and kill good subjects faster than a burning fever, and then school-mistresses of the sweet sin, which commonly we call bawds, innumerable of that sort for these and such causes 'tis thought they shall not live above fifty

Aga Ay, man, but this hurts not the good old women

Gnoth I'faith, you are so like one another, that a man cannot distinguish 'em now, were I an old woman, I

would desire to go before my time, and offer myself willingly, two or three years before O, those are brave women, and worthy to be commended of all men in the world, that, when their husbands die, they run to be burnt to death with 'em there's honour and credit¹ give me half a dozen such wives 297

Aga Ay, if her husband were dead before, 'twere a reasonable request, if you were dead, I could be content to be so

Gnoth Fie! that's not likely, for thou hadst two husbands before me 302

Aga Thou wouldst not have me die, wouldst thou, husband?

Gnoth No, I do not speak to that purpose, but I say wnat credit it were for me and thee, if thou wouldst, then thou shouldst never be suspected for a witch, a physician, a bawd, or any of those things and then how daintily should I mourn for thee, how bravely¹ should I see thee buried! when, alas, if he goes before, it cannot choose but be a great grief to him to think he has not seen his wife well buried There be such virtuous women in the world, but too few, too few, who desire to die seven years before their time, with all their hearts 314

Aga I have not the heart to be of that mind, but, indeed, husband, I think you would have me gone

Gnoth No, alas! I speak but for your good and your credit, for when a woman may die quickly, why should she go to law for her death? Alack, I need not wish thee

¹ Finely

gone, for thou hast but a short time to stay with me you do not know how near 'tis,—it must out, you have but a month to live by the law 322

Aga Out, alas !

Gnoth Nay, scarce so much

Aga O, O, O, my heart ! [Swoons

Gnoth Ay, so ! if thou wouldst go away quietly, 'twere sweetly done, and like a kind wife, lie but a little longer, and the bell shall toll for thee

Aga O my heart, but a month to live !

Gnoth Alas, why wouldst thou come back again for a month ?—I'll throw her down again—O, woman, 'tis not three weeks, I think a fortnight is the most 332

Aga Nay, then I am gone already [Swoons

Gnoth I would make haste to the sexton now, but I'm afraid the tolling of the bell will wake her again If she be so wise as to go now—she stirs again, there's two lives of the nine gone

Aga O, wouldst thou not help to recover me, husband ?

Gnoth Alas, I could not find in my heart to hold thee by thy nose, or box thy cheeks, it goes against my conscience 341

Aga I will not be thus frightened to my death, I'll search the church-record a fortnight ! 'tis Too little of conscience, I cannot be so near, O time, if thou be'st kind, lend me but a year ! [Exit

Gnoth What a spite's this, that a man cannot persuade his wife to die in any time with her good will ! I have another bespoke already, though a piece of old beef will serve to breakfast, yet a man would be glad of

a chicken to supper The clerk, I hope, understands
no Hebrew, and cannot write backward what he hath
writ forward already, and then I am well enough 352
'Tis but a month at most, if that were gone,
My venture comes in with her two for one
'Tis use enough a' conscience for a broker ¹—if he had a
conscience. [Exit

SCENE II

A Room in CREON'S House

*Enter EUGENIA at one door, SIMONIDES and Courtiers at
the other*

Eug Gentlemen courtiers

First Court All your servants vow'd, lady

Eug O, I shall kill myself with infinite laughter ¹
Will nobody take my part?

Sim An't be a laughing business,
Put it to me, I'm one of the best in Europe,
My father died last too, I have the most cause

Eug You ha' picked out such a time, sweet gentle-
men,

To make your spleen a banquet

Sim O the jest ¹

Lady, I have a jaw stands ready for't, 10
I'll gape half way, and meet it

Eug My old husband,
That cannot say his prayers out for jealousy,
And madness at your coming first to woo me——

¹ Old ed " brother

Sim Well said

First Court Go on

Second Court On, on

Eug Takes counsel with

The secrets of all art, to make himself

Youthful again

Sim How? youthful! ha, ha, ha!

Eug A man of forty-five he would fain seem to be,
Or scarce so much, if he might have his will, indeed

Sim Ay, but his white hairs, they'll betray his hoariness

Eug Why, there you are wide he's not the man you
take him for, 20

Nor¹ will you know him when you see him again,
There will be five to one laid upon that

First Court How!

Eug Nay, you did well to laugh faintly there,
I promise you, I think he'll outlive me now,
And deceive law and all

Sim Marry, gout forbid!

Eug You little think he was at fencing-school
At four o'clock this morning

Sim How, at fencing-school!

Eug Else give no trust to woman

Sim By this light,

I do not like him, then, he's like to live 30
Longer than I, for he may kill me first, now

Eug His dancer now came in as I met you

¹ Old ed "Nay"

First Court His dancer, too !

Eug They observe turns and hours with him ,
The great French rider will be here at ten,
With his curvetting horse

Second Court These notwithstanding,
His hair and wrinkles will betray his age

Eug I'm sure his head and beard, as he has order'd
it,

Look not past fifty now he'll bring't to forty
Within these four days, for nine times an hour at least ¹
He takes a black-lead comb, and kems it over 40
Three quarters of his beard is under fifty ,
There's but a little tuft of fourscore left,
All of one side, which will be black by Monday

Enter LYSANDER

And, to approve my truth, see where he comes !
Laugh softly, gentlemen, and look upon him

[*They go aside*

Sim Now, by this hand, he's almost black i'the
mouth, indeed

First Court He should die shortly, then

Sim Marry, methinks he dies too fast already,
For he was all white but a week ago

First Court O, this same coney-white takes an ex-
cellent black, 50

Too soon, a mischief on't !

¹ Gifford and Dyce omit the words "at least," for the sake of the metre

Second Court He will beguile¹

Us all, if that little tuft northward turn black too

Eug Nay, sir, I wonder 'tis so long a turning

Sim May be some fairy's child, held forth at midnight,

Has piss'd upon that side

First Court Is this the beard?

Lys Ah, sirrah? my young boys, I shall be for you

This little mangy tuft takes up more time

Than all the beard beside Come you a wooing,

And I alive and lusty? you shall find

An alteration, jack-boys, I have a spirit yet, 60

(And I could match my hair to't, there's the fault,)

And can do offices of youth yet lightly,

At least, I will do, though it pain me a little

Shall not a man, for a little foolish age,

Enjoy his wife to himself? must young court tits

Play tomboys' tricks with her, and he live? ha!

I have blood that will not bear't, yet, I confess,

I should be at my prayers—but where's the dancer,
there!

Enter Dancing-Master

Mast Here, sir

Lys Come, come, come, one trick a day,

And I shall soon recover all again 70

Eug 'Shight, and you laugh too loud, we are all discover'd, gentlemen

¹ Old ed 'beguild'

Sim And I have a scurvy grinning¹ laugh a' mine own,

Will spoil all, I am afraid

Eug Marry, take heed, sir

Sim Nay, and I should be hang'd, I cannot leave it ,
Pup !—there 'tis [Bursts into a laugh

Eug Peace ! O, peace !

Lys Come, I am ready, sir

I hear the church-book's lost where I was born too,

And that shall set me back one² twenty years ,

There is no little comfort left in that

And—[then] my three court-codlings, that look parboil'd,
As if they came from Cupid's scalding-house— — 80

Sim He means me specially, I hold my life

Mast What trick will your old worship learn this morning, sir ?

Lys Marry, a trick, if thou couldst teach a man,
To keep his wife to himself, I'd fain learn that

Mast That's a hard trick, for an old man specially ,
The horse-trick comes the nearest

Lys Thou sayst true, i'faith,
They must be hors'd indeed, else there's no keeping on 'em,

And horse-play at fourscore is not so ready

Mast Look you, here's your worship's horse-trick,³
sir [Gives a spring

¹ So Dyce and Gifford for the old ed 's "ginny "

² Old ed "one and "

³ ' Some rough curvetting is here meant, but I know not the precise motion The word occurs in a *Woman killed with Kindness* ' I though

Lys Nay, say not so, 90
'Tis none of mine, I fall down horse and man,
If I but offer at it

Mast My life for yours, sir

Lys Sayst thou me so? [*Springs aloft*]

Mast Well offer'd, by my viol, sir

Lys A pox of this horse-trick 't has play'd the jade
with me,

And given me a wrench i'the back

Mast Now here's your inturn, and your trick above
ground

Lys Prithee, no more, unless thou hast a mind
To lay me under ground, one of these tricks
Is enough in a morning

Mast For your galliard, sir,
You are complete enough, ay, and may challenge 100
The proudest coxcomb of 'em all, I'll stand to't

Lys Faith, and I've other weapons for the rest too
I have prepar'd for 'em, if e'er I take
My Gregories here again

Sim O, I shall burst
I can hold out no longer

Eug He spoils all [*They come forward*]

Lys The devil and his grinners 'are you come?
Bring forth the weapons, we shall find you play!
All feats of youth too, jack-boys, feats of youth,
And these the weapons, drinking, fencing, dancing

we be but country fellows, it may be in the way of dancing, we can do
the horse-trick as well as the serving men '—A 1"—*Gifford*

Your own road-ways, you gylster-pipes¹ I'm old, you
say, 110

Yes, parlous old, kids, and you mark me well¹
This beard cannot get children, you lank suck-eggs,
Unless such weasels come from court to help us
We will get our own brats, you lecherous dog-bolts

Enter a Servant with foils and glasses

Well said, down with 'em now we shall see your spirits
What¹ dwindle you already?

Second Court I have no quality

Sim Nor I, unless drinking may be reckon'd for one

First Court Why, Sim, it shall

Lys Come, dare you choose your weapon now?

First Court I? dancing, sir, and you will be so
hasty 120

Lys We're for you, sir

Second Court Fencing, I

Lys We'll answer you too

Sim I am for drinking, your wet weapon there

Lys That wet one has cost many a princox¹ life,
And I will send it through you with a powder¹

Sim Let [it] come, with a pox¹ I care not, so't be
drink

I hope my guts will hold, and that's e'en all
A gentleman can look for of such trillibubs²

¹ Coxcomb

² "This seems to be a cant word for anything of a trifling nature
—Gifford

Lys Play the first weapon , come, strike, strike, I
say 130

Yes, yes, you shall be first , I'll observe court rules
Always the worst goes foremost, so 'twill prove, I hope
[First Courtier *dances a galliard*¹

So, sir¹ you've spit your poison , now come I
Now, forty years go² backward and assist me,
Fall from me half my age,, but for three minutes,
That I may feel no crick¹ I will put fair for't,
Although I hazard twenty sciaticas [Dances
So, I have hit you

First Court You've done well, i'faith, sir

Lys If you confess it well, 'tis excellent,
And I have hit you soundly , I am warm now 140
The second weapon instantly

Second Court What, so quick, sir?

Will you not allow yourself a breathing-time?

Lys I've breath enough at all times, Lucifer's muskcod,
To give your perfumed worship three vennes³

¹ In the old ed the stage direction is " A Gailliard Laminiard " The word " Laminiard " probably represents the name of the tune perhaps a corruption of " La Mignarde " The galliard is thus described in Sir John Davies' Poem on Dancing —

" But for more diverse and more pleasing show

A swift and wand ring dance he did invent,

With passages uncertain to and fro

Yet with a certain answer and consent

To the quick movement of the instrument

Five was the number of the music's feet,

Which still the dance did with five paces meet

With lofty turns and capriols in the air,

Which with the lusty tunes accordeth fair "

² Old ed " ago "

³ Assaults in fencing

A sound old man puts his thrust better home
Than a spic'd young man there I [*They fence*
Second Court Then have at you, fourscore
Lys You lie, twenty, I hope, and you shall find it
Sim I'm glad I miss'd this weapon, I['d] had an
eye
Popt out ere this time, or my two butter-teeth 150
Thrust down my throat instead of a flap-dragon ¹
Lys There's two, pentweezle [*Hits him*
Mast Excellently touch'd, sir
Second Court Had ever man such luck ¹ speak your
opinion, gentlemen
Sim Methinks, your luck's good, that your eyes are
in still,
Mine would have dropt out, like a pig's half-roasted
Lys There wants a third—and there it is again ¹
[*Hits him again*
Second Court The devil has steel'd him
Eug What a strong fiend is jealousy ¹
Lys You're despatch'd, bear-whelp
Sim Now comes my weapon in
Lys Here, toadstool, here 160
'Tis you ² and I must play these three wet vennies
Sim Vennies in Venice glasses ¹ let 'em come,
They'll bruise no flesh, I'm sure, nor break no bones
Second Court Yet you may drink your eyes out, sir
Sim Ay, but that's nothing,

¹ Gallants in former days used to show their devotion to their mistresses by swallowing candles' ends soaked in lighted brandy

² Old ed 'with you'

Then they go voluntarily I do not
Love to have 'em thrust out, whether they will or no

Lys Here's your first weapon, duck's-meat

Sim How ' a Dutch what-you-call-'em,
Stead of a German faulchion ' a shrewd weapon, 170
And, of all things, hard to be taken down
Yet down it must, I have a nose goes into't ,
I shall drink double, I think

First Court The sooner off, *Sim*

Lys I'll pay you speedily,¹ ——— with a trick
I learnt once amongst drunkards , here's half-pike ²

[*Drinks*

Sim Half-pike comes well after Dutch what-you call-'em,
They'd never be asunder by their good will ³

First Court Well pull'd of an old fellow ¹

Lys O, but your fellows
Pull better at a rope

First Court There's a hair, *Sim*,
In that glass 180

Sim An't be as long as a halter, down it goes ,
No hair shall cross me [*Drinks*

¹ It was left to the actor to fill up the blank with some opprobrious term

² " A particular exercise with the pike

'*Jer* Well, I'll try one course with thee at the *half-pike*,
And then go,—come, draw thy pike '

Tragedy of Hoffman, 1631 "—Nares' Glossary, ed Halliwell

³ " This stuff is not worth explaining , but the reader if he has any curiosity on the subject, may amply gratify it by a visit to *Pantagruel* and his companions on the Isle Ennasin Below, there is a miserable pun upon *hair*—the *crossing* of an *hare* was ominous "—*Gifford*

Lys. I['ll] make you stink worse than your pole-cats do.

Here's long-sword, your last weapon

[Offers him the glass]

Sim No more weapons

First Court Why, how now, *Sim*? bear up, thou sham'st us all, else

Sim ['S]light, I shall shame you worse, and I stay longer

I ha' got the scotomy¹ in my head already,

The whimsey you all turn round—do not you dance, gallants?

Second Court Pish! what's all this? why, *Sim*, look, the last venny

Sim No more vennies goes down here, for these two
Are coming up again 191

Second Court Out! the disgrace of drinkers!

Sim Yes, 'twill out,
Do you smell nothing yet?

First Court Smell!

Sim Farewell quickly, then,
It will do, if I stay

[Exit]

First Court A foil go with thee!

Lys What, shall we put down youth at her own virtues?

Beat folly in her own ground? wondrous much!

Why may not we be held as full sufficient

To love our own wives then, get our own children. 200

¹ Dizziness

And live in free peace till we be dissolv'd,
 For such spring butterflies that are gaudy-wing'd,
 But no more substance than those shamble-flies
 Which butchers' boys snap between sleep and waking?
 Come but to crush you once, you are¹ but maggots,
 For all your beamy outsides!

Enter CLEANTHES

Eug Here's Cleanthes,
 He comes to chide,—let him alone a little,
 Our cause will be reveng'd, look, look, his face
 Is set for stormy weather, do but mark
 How the clouds gather in't, 'twill pour down straight 210

Clean Methinks, I partly know you, that's my grief
 Could you not all be lost? that had been handsome,
 But to be known at all, 'tis more than shameful
 Why, was not your name wont to be Lysander?

Lys 'Tis so still, coz

Clean Judgment, defer thy coming! else this man's
 miserable

Eug I told you there would be a shower anon

Second Court We'll in, and hide our noddles

[*Exeunt EUGENIA and Courtiers*]

Clean What devil brought this colour to your mind,
 Which, since your childhood, I ne'er saw you wear? 220
 [Sure] you were ever of an innocent gloss
 Since I was ripe for knowledge, and would you lose it,
 And change the livery of saints and angels

¹ Old ed "are all" (The compositor's eye caught the word "all" from the following line)

For this mixt monstrousness , to force a ground
That has been so long hallow'd like a temple,
To bring forth fruits of earth now , and turn back ¹
To the wild cries of lust, and the complexion
Of sin in act, lost and long since repented '
Would you begin a work ne'er yet attempted,
To pull time backward ? 230
See what your wife will do ' are your wits perfect ?

Lys My wits '

Clean I like it ten times worse , for't had been safer
Now to be mad,² and more excusable
I hear you dance again, and do strange follies

Lys. I must confess I have been put to some, coz

Clean And yet you are not mad ' pray, say not so ,
Give me that comfort of you, that you are mad,
That I may think you are at worst , for if
You are not mad, I then must guess you have 240
The first of some disease was never heard of,
Which may be worse than madness, and more fearful
You'd weep to see yourself else, and your care
To pray would quickly turn you white again
I had a father, had he liv'd his month out,
But to ha' seen this most prodigious folly,
There needed not the law to have him cut off ,
The sight of this had prov'd his executioner,
And broke his heart he would have held it equal
Done to a sanctuary,—for what is age 250

¹ Old ed. " black

² "*Minus est insania turpis* There are many traits of Massinger in this part of the scene"—*Gifford*

But the holy place of life, chapel of ease
For all men's wearied miseries? and to rob
That of her ornament, it is accurst
As from a priest to steal a holy vestment,
Ay, and convert it to a simple covering

[*Exit* LYSANDER.]

I see't has done him good, blessing go with it,
Such as may make him pure again

Re-enter EUGENIA

Eug 'Twas bravely touch'd, i'faith, sir

Clean O, you're welcome

Eug Exceedingly well handled

Clean 'Tis to you I come, he fell but i' my way 260

Eug You mark'd his beard, cousin?

Clean Mark me

Eug Did you ever see a hair so changed?

Clean I must be forc'd to wake her loudly too,
The devil has rock'd her so fast asleep —
Strumpet!

Eug Do you call, sir?

Clean Whore!

Eug How do you, sir?

Clean Be I ne'er so well,

I must be sick of thee, thou'rt a disease
That stick'st to th'heart,—as all such women are

Eug What ails our kindred?

Clean Bless me, she sleeps still!

What a dead modesty is i' this woman,
Will never blush again! Look on thy work

But with a Christian eye, 'twould turn thy heart
Into a shower of blood, to be the cause
Of that old man's destruction , think upon't,
Ruin eternally , for, through thy loose follies,
Heaven has found him a faint servant lately ¹
His goodness has gone backward, and engender'd
With his old sins again , has ¹ lost his prayers,
And all the tears that were companions with 'em
And like a blindfold man, (giddy and blinded,) 280
Thinking he goes right on still, swerves but one foot,
And turns to the same place where he set out ,
So he, that took his farewell of the world,
And cast the joys behind him, out of sight,
Summ'd up his hours, made even with time and men,
Is now in heart arriv'd at youth again,
All by thy wildness thy too hasty lust
Has driven him to this strong apostacy
Immodesty like thine was never equal'd
I've heard of women, (shall I call 'em so ?) 290
Have welcom'd suitors ere the corpse were cold ,
But thou, thy husband living —thou'rt too bold
Eug Well, have you done now, sir ?
Clean Look, look ! she smiles yet
Eug All this is nothing to a mind resolv'd .
Ask any woman that, she'll tell you so much
You have only shown a pretty saucy wit,
Which I shall not forget, nor to requite it
You shall hear from me shortly

1 : e he has

Clean Shameless woman !

I take my counsel from thee, 'tis too honest,
And leave thee wholly to thy stronger master 300
Bless the sex of thee from thee ! that's my prayer
Were all like thee, so impudently common,
No man would be found to wed a woman

[*Exit*

Eug I'll fit you gloriously
He that attempts to take away my pleasure,
I'll take away his joy, and I can sure
His conceal'd father pays for't I'll e'en tell
Him that I mean to make my husband next,
And he shall tell the duke—mass, here he comes

Re-enter SIMONIDES

Sim Has had a bout with me too

Eug What ! no ? since, sir ? 310

Sim A flirt, a little flirt, he call'd me strange names,
But I ne'er minded him

Eug You shall quit him, sir,
When he as little minds you

Sim I like that well
I love to be reveng'd when no one thinks of me,
There's little danger that way

Eug This is it then,
He you shall strike, your stroke shall be profound,
And yet your foe not guess who gave the wound

Sim A' my troth, I love to give such wounds

[*Exeunt*

ACT IV

SCENE I

Before a Tavern

*Enter GNOTHO, Butler, Bailiff, Tailor, Cook, Drawer,
and Courtezan*

Draw Welcome, gentlemen, will you not draw near?
will you drink at door, gentlemen?

But O, the summer air's best

Draw What wine will[t] please you drink, gentlemen?

But De Clare, sirrah. {*Exit Drawer*

Gnoth What, you're all sped already, bulhes?¹

Cook My widow s a' the spit, and half ready, lad, a
turn or two more, and I have done with her

Gnoth Then, cook, I hope you have basted her before
this time 11

Cook And stuck her with rosemary too, to sweeten
her, she was tainted ere she came to my hands. What
an old piece of flesh of fifty nine, eleven months, and
upwards! she must needs be fly-blown

¹ Companions

Gnoth Put her off, put her off, though you lose by her, the weather's hot

Cook Why, drawer¹

Re enter Drawer

Draw By and by —here, gentlemen, here's the quintessence of Greece, the sages never drunk better grape. 21

Cook Sir, the mad Greeks of this age can taste their Palermo as well as the sage Greeks did before 'em —Fill, lick-spiggot

Draw *Ad unum*, sir

Gnoth My friends, I must doubly invite you all, the fifth of the next month, to the funeral of my first wife, and to the marriage of my second, my two to one, this is she

Cook I hope some of us will be ready for the funeral of our wives by that time, to go with thee but shall they be both of a day? 32

Gnoth O, best of all, sir, where sorrow and joy meet together, one will help away with another the better Besides, there will be charges saved too, the same rosemary¹ that serves for the funeral will serve for the wedding

But How long do you make account to be a widower, sir?

Gnoth Some half an hour, long enough a' conscience

¹ Rosemary, as being symbolical of remembrance, was commonly used at weddings and funerals

Come, come, let's have some agility, is there no music in the house? 42

Draw. Yes, sir, here are sweet wire-drawers in the house

Cook O, that makes them and you seldom part, you are wine-drawers, and they wire-drawers

Tail And both govern by the pegs too

Gnoth And you have pipes in your consort¹ too

Draw And sackbuts too, sir

But But the heads of your instruments differ, yours are hogs-heads, their[s] cittern and gutternheads 51

Bail All wooden heads there they meet again

Cook Bid 'em strike up, we'll have a dance Gnotho,² come, thou shalt foot it too [Exit Drawer

Gnoth No dancing with me, we have Siren here

Cook Siren³ 'twas Hiren,⁴ the fair Greek, man

Gnoth Five drachmas of that I say Siren, the fair Greek, and so are all fair Greeks

Cook A match⁵ five drachmas her name was Hiren

Gnoth Siren's name was Siren, for five drachmas 60

Cook 'Tis done

Tail Take heed what you do, Gnotho⁶

Gnoth Do not I know our own countrywomen, Siren

¹ Band of musicians

² Old ed. 'Gnothoes'

³ Old ed. 'foole'

⁴ Peele wrote a play (that has not come down) entitled *The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek*. Probably in this play occurred the words "Have we not Hiren here?" quoted by Pistol in *2 Henry IV*

⁵ Old ed. "Gnothoes"

and Nell of Greece, two of the fairest Greeks that ever were ?

Cook That Nell was Helen of Greece too

Gnoth As long as she tarried with her husband, she was Ellen , but after she came to Troy, she was Nell of Troy, or Bonny Nell, whether you will or no

Tail Why, did she grow shor[t]er when she came to Troy ? 71

Gnoth She grew longer,¹ if you mark the story When she grew to be an ell, she was deeper than any yard of Troy could reach by a quarter , there was Cressid was Troy weight, and Nell was avoirdupois , ² she held more, by four ounces, than Cressida

Bail They say she caused many wounds to be given in Troy

Gnoth True, she was wounded there herself, and cured again by plaster of Paris , and ever since that has been used to stop holes with 81

Re enter Drawer

Draw Gentlemen, if you be disposed to be merry, the music is ready to strike up , and here's a consort³ of mad Greeks, I know not whether they be men or women, or between both they have, what-you-call 'em, wizards⁴ on their faces

¹ "This miserable trash, which is quite silly enough to be original has yet the merit of being copied from Shakespeare" — *Gifford*

² Old ed "haberdepoysc "

³ Band

⁴ Old ed "vizards

Cook Vizards, good man lick-spiggot

But If they be wise women, they may be wizards too.

Draw They desire to enter amongst any merry company of gentlemen good-fellows, for a strain or two 90

Enter old Women and AGATHA in masks

Cook We'll strain ourselves with 'em, say, let 'em come, Gnotho, ' now for the honour of Epire ' 1

Gnoth No ² dancing with me, we have Siren here

[*A dance by the old Women and AGATHA, they offer to take the men, all agree except GNOTHO, who sits whispering with the Courtezan* ³

Cook Ay ' so kind ' then every one his wench to his several room, Gnotho, ⁴ we are all provided now, as you are

[*Excunt all but GNOTHO, Courtezan, and AGATHA*

Gnoth I shall have two, it seems away ' I have Siren here already

Aga What, a mermaid ? ⁵ [*Takes off her mask*

Gnoth No, but a maid, horse-face O old woman ' is it you ? 101

Aga Yes, 'tis I, all the rest have gulled themselves, and taken their own wives, and shall know that they have done more than they can well answer, but I pray you, husband, what are you doing ?

Gnoth Faith, thus should I do, if thou wert dead, old

¹ Old ed "Gnothoes "

² Old ed "she "

³ The stage-direction in the old ed is— *The Dance of old women maskt then offer to take the men, they agree all but Gnothoes he sits with his Wench after they whisper*

⁴ Old ed "Gnothoes

⁵ Cant term for whore

Ag, and thou hast not long to live, I'm sure we have Siren here

Aga. Art thou so shameless, whilst I am living, to keep one under my nose? 110

Gnoth No, Ag, I do prize her far above thy nose, if thou wouldst lay me both thine eyes in my hand to boot, I'll not leave her art not ashamed to be seen in a tavern, and hast scarce a fortnight to live? O old woman, what art thou? must thou find no time to think of thy end?

Aga O unkind villain!

Gnoth And then sweetheart, thou shalt have two new gowns, and the best of this old¹ woman's shall make thee raiments for the working days

Aga O rascal! dost thou quarter my clothes already too? 121

Gnoth Her ruffs will serve thee for nothing but to wash dishes, for thou shalt have thine² of the new fashion

Aga Impudent villain! shameless harlot!

Gnoth You may hear, she never wore any but rails³ all her lifetime

Aga Let me come, I'll tear the strumpet from him

Gnoth Darest thou call my wife strumpet, thou preter pluperfect tense of a woman! I'll make thee do penance in the sheet thou shalt be buried in, abuse my choice, my two to one! 132

Aga No, unkind villain! I'll deceive thee yet,

¹ Old ed. "old old"

² Old ed. "nine"

³ "A rayle or kercher, mamillare"—*Withal's Dictionary*, ed 1608

I have a reprieve for five years of life ,
I am with child

Court Cud so, Gnotho,¹ I'll not tarry so long five years ! I may bury two husbands by that time

Gnoth Alas ! give the poor woman leave to talk she with child ! ay, with a puppy as long as I have thee by me, she shall not be with child, I warrant thee 140

Aga The law, and thou, and all, shall find I am with child

Gnoth I'll take my corporal oath I begat it not, and then thou diest for adultery

Aga No matter, that will ask some time in the proof

Gnoth O, you'd be stoned to death, would you ? all old women would die a' that fashion with all their hearts , but the law shall overturn you the tother way, first

Court Indeed, if it be so, I will not linger so long, Gnotho² 151

Gnoth Away, away ! some botcher has got it , 'tis but a cushion, I warrant thee the old woman is *loath to depart* ,³ she never sung other tune in her life

Court We will not have our noses bored with a cushion, if it be so

Gnoth Go, go thy ways, thou old almanac at the twenty-eighth day of December, e'en almost out of date ! Down on thy knees, and make thee ready , sell some of

¹ Old ed. "Gnothoes "

² Old ed. "Gnothoes

³ "There was anciently both a tune and a dance of this name , to the former of which Gnotho alludes "—*Gifford*

thy clothes to buy thee a death's head, and put upon thy middle finger your least considering bawd¹ doe[s] so much, be not thou worse, though thou art an old woman, as she is I am cloyed with old stock-fish, here's a young perch is sweeter meat by half prithee, die before thy day, if thou canst, that thou mayst not be counted a witch

166

Aga No, thou art a witch, and I'll prove it I said I was with child, thou knewest no other but by sorcery thou said'st it was a cushion, and so it is, thou art a witch for't, I'll be sworn to't

Gnoth Ha, ha, ha! I told thee 'twas a cushion Go, get thy sheet ready, we'll see thee buried as we go to church to be married

173

[*Exeunt GNOTHO and Courtezan*]

Aga Nay, I'll follow thee and show myself a wife I'll plague thee as long as I live with thee, and I'll bury some money before I die,² that my ghost may haunt thee afterward

[*Exit*]

¹ It appears to have been a common practice for bawds to wear rings with death's heads on them. Cf. Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*. - As for their death how can it be bad since the wicket is always before their eyes and a death's head most commonly on their middle finger

² It was a common superstition that ghosts haunted the spot where in their lifetime they had concealed treasure

SCENE II

*The Country A Forest**Enter CLEANTHES*

Clean What's that? O, nothing but the whispering
wind

Breathes through yon churlish hawthorn, that grew rude,
As if it chid the gentle breath that kiss'd it
I cannot be too circumspect, too careful,
For in these woods lies hid all my life's treasure,
Which is too much [n]ever to fear to loose,
Though¹ it be never lost and if our watchfulness
Ought to be wise and serious 'gainst² a thief
That comes to steal our goods, things all without us
That proves vexation often more than comfort. 15
How mighty ought our providence to be
To prevent those, if any such there were,
That come to rob our bosom of our joys,
'That only makes poor man delight to live '
Pshaw ' I m too fearful—fie, fie ' who can hurt me ?
But 'tis a general cowardice, that shakes
The nerves of confidence he that hides treasure,
Imagines every one thinks of that place,
When 'tis a thing least minded , nay, let him change
The place continually , where'er it keeps, 20

¹ In the old ed. the prefix *His* is given to this line

² Old ed. " ag unst

There will the fear keep still yonder's the store-house
Of all my comfort now—and see ! it sends forth

Enter HIPPOLITA from the wood

A dear one to me —Precious chief of women,
How does the good old soul? has he fed well?

Hip Beshrew me, sir, he made the heartiest meal to-day—

Much good may't do his health

Clean A blessing on thee,
Both for thy news and wish !

Hip His stomach, sir,
Is better'd wondrously since his concealment

Clean Heaven has a blessed work in't Come, we're
safe here ,

I prithee, call him forth , the air's much wholesomer 30

Hip Father !

Enter LEONIDES

*Leon*¹ How sweetly sounds the voice of a good
woman !

It is so seldom heard, that, when it speaks,

It ravishes all senses Lists² of honour !

I've a joy weeps³ to see you, 'tis so full,

So fairly fruitful

¹ In the old ed the prefix is ' *Hip*

² The old ed gives the words Lists of honour So fairly
fruitful to Cleanthes

³ In the *Changeling* we have the same idea beautifully expressed —

' Our sweet st delights
Are evermore born weeping '

Clean I hope to see you often and return
Loaden with blessings, still to pour on some,
I find 'em all in my contented peace,
And lose not one in thousands, they're disperst 40
So gloriously, I know not which are brightest
I find 'em, as angels are found, by legions.
First, in the love and honesty of a wife,
Which is the first and chiefest of all¹ temporal blessings,
Next, in yourself, which is the hope and joy
Of all my actions, my affairs, my wishes,
And lastly, which crowns all, I find my soul
Crown'd with the peace of 'em, th' eternal riches,
Man's only portion for his heavenly marriage!

Leon Rise, thou art all obedience, love and goodness 50
I dare say that which thousand fathers cannot,
And that's my precious comfort, never son
Was in the way more of celestial rising
Thou art so made of such ascending virtue,
That all the powers of hell can't sink thee

[*A horn sounded within*]

Clean Ha!

Leon What was't disturb'd my joy?

Clean Did you not hear,
As afar off?

¹ By omitting this word and reading 'chiefst' the line would be brought within proper dimensions (Dyce and Gifford read 'Which is the chiefest of all,' &c.)

Leon What, my excellent comfort ?¹

Clean Nor you ?

Hip I heard a——

[*A horn.* 60]

Clean Hark, again !

Leon Bless my joy,

What ails it on a sudden ?

Clean Now ? since lately ?

Leon 'Tis nothing but a symptom of thy care, man

Clean Alas, you do not hear well !

Leon What was't daughter ?

Hip I heard a sound twice.

[*A horn.*]

Clean Hark ! louder and nearer

In for the precious good of virtue, quick, sir !

Louder and nearer yet ! at hand, at hand !

[*Exit LEONIDES*]

A hunting here ! 'tis strange I never knew

Game follow'd in these woods before

70

Enter EVANDER, SIMONIDES, Courtiers, and CRATILUS

Hip Now let 'em come, and spare not

Clean Ha ! 'tis—is't not the duke ?—look sparingly

Hip 'Tis he, but what of that ? alas, take heed, sir,
Your care will overthrow us

Clean Come, it shall not be

¹ 'The old copy has *consort* which induced Coxeter to give the speech to Hippolita. I have little doubt but that the mistake is in this word, which should be *comfort* as it stands in the text by this term the fond parent frequently addresses his children. In the mouth of Leonides, too, it forms a natural reply to the question of Cleanthes, who then turns to make the same demand of his wife. —*Gifford*

Let's set a pleasant face upon our fears,
Though our hearts shake with horror — Ha, ha, ha !

Evan Hark !

Clean Prthee, proceed ,
I'm taken with these light things infinitely,
Since the old man's decease , ha ?—so they parted ? 80
Ha, ha, ha !

Evan Why, how should I believe this ? look, he's
merry,
As if he had no such charge one with that care
Could never be so , still he holds his temper,
And 'tis the same still (with no difference)
He brought his father's corpse to the grave with
He laugh'd thus then, you know

First Court Ay, he may laugh, my lord,
That shows but how he glories in his cunning
And [is], perhaps, done more to advance his wit, 90
That¹ only he has over reach'd the law,
Than to express affection to his father

Sim He tells you right, my lord , his own cousin-
german
Reveal'd it first to me , a free tongued woman
And very excellent at telling secrets

Evan If a contempt can be so neatly carried,
It gives me cause of wonder

Sim Troth, my lord,
'Twill prove a delicate cozening, I believe
I'd have no scrivener offer to come near it

¹ In the old ed. this line and the next are transposed

Evan Cleanthes

Clean My lov'd lord

Evan Not mov'd a whit, 100

Constant to lightness¹ still¹ 'Tis strange to meet you
Upon a ground so unfrequented, sir
This does not fit your passion, you're for mirth,
Or I mistake you much

Clean But finding it

Grow to a noted imperfection in me,
For anything too much is vicious,
I come to these disconsolate walks, of purpose,
Only to dull and take away the edge on't
I ever had a greater zeal to sadness,
A natural propension,² I confess, my lord, 110
Before that cheerful accident fell out—
If I may call a father's funeral cheerful,
Without wrong done to duty or my love

Evan It seems, then, you take pleasure i'these walks,
sir

Clean Contemplative content I do, my lord
They bring into my mind oft meditations
So sweetly precious, that, in the parting,
I find a shower of grace upon my cheeks,
They take their leave so feelingly

Evan So, sir¹

Clean Which is a kind of grave delight, my lord 120

Evan And I've small cause, Cleanthes, to afford you
The least delight that has a name

¹ Old ed "lightning"

² Old ed "proportion"

Clean My lord !

Sim Now it begins to fadge

First Court Peace ! thou art so greedy, *Sim*

Evan In your excess of joy you have express'd

Your rancour and contempt against my law

Your smiles deserve fining , you've profess'd

Derision openly, e'en to my face,

Which might be death, a little more incensed

You do not come for any freedom here,

130

But for a project of your own —

But all that's known to be contentful to thee,

Shall in the use prove deadly Your life's mine.

If ever thy presumption do but lead thee

Into these walks again,—ay, or that woman ,

I'll have 'em watch'd a' purpose

[*CLEANTHES retires from the wood, followed by*

HIPPOLITA

First Court Now, now, his colour ebbs and flows

Sim Mark her's too

Hip O, who shall bring food to the poor old man,
now !

Speak, somewhat, good sir, or we're lost for ever

Clean O, you did wondrous ill to call me again ! 140

'There are not words to help us , if I entreat,

'Tis found , that will betray us worse than silence

Prithee, let heaven alone, and let's say nothing

First Court You've struck 'em dumb, my lord

Sim Look how guilt looks !

I would not have that fear upon my flesh,

To save ten fathers

Clean He is safe still, is he not ?

Hip O, you do ill to doubt it

Clean Thou art all goodness

Sim Now does your grace believe ?

Evan 'Tis too apparent

Search, make a speedy search, for the imposture

Cannot be far off, by the fear it sends 150

Clean Ha !

Sim Has ¹ the lapwing's cunning, I'm afraid, my lord,
That cries most when she's farthest ² from the nest

Clean O, we're betray'd !

Hip Betray'd, sir !

Sim See, my lord,

It comes out more and more still

[SIMONIDES and Courtiers enter the wood]

Clean Bloody thief !

Come from that place, 'tis sacred, homicide !

'Tis not for thy adulterate hands to touch it

Hip O, miserable virtue, what distress
Art thou in at this minute !

Clean Help me, thunder,

For my power's lost ! angels, shoot plagues, and help
me ! 160

Why are these men in health, and I so heart-sick ?

Or why should nature have that power in me

To levy up a thousand bleeding sorrows,

And not one comfort ? only makes me lie

¹ i.e. he has

² Allusions to the lapwing's subtlety are very common. Among Ray's Proverbs we find—"The lapwing cries most farthest from her nest."

Like the poor mockery of an earthquake here,
Panting with horror,
And have not so much force in all my vengeance,
To shake a villain off me !¹

Re-enter SIMONIDES and Courtiers with LEONIDES

Hip Use him gently,
And heaven will love you for't
Clean Father ! O father ! now I see thee full 170
In thy affliction ,² thou'rt a man of sorrow,
But reverently becom'st it, that's my comfort
Extremity was never better grac'd
Than with that look of thine , O, let me look still,
For I shall lose it ! all my joy and strength [*Kneels*
Is e'en eclips'd together I transgressed
Your law, my lord, let me receive the sting on t ,
Be once just, sir, and let the offender die
He's innocent in all, and I am guilty

Leon Your grace knows, when affection only speaks
Truth is not always there , his love would draw 181
An undeserved misery on his youth,
And wrong a peace resolv'd, on both parts sinful
'Tis I am guilty of my own concealment,
And, like a worldly coward, injur'd heaven
With fear to go to't —now I see my fault,
I am prepar'd with joy to suffer for't

¹ Old ed " a mee "

² Old ed " affection "

Evan Go, give him quick despatch, let him see death

And your presumption, sir, shall come to judgment.

[*Exeunt* EVANDER, Courtiers, SIMONIDES, *and*

CRATILUS *with* LEONIDES

Hip He's going ! O, he's gone, sir !

Clean Let me rise 190

Hip Why do you not then, and follow ?

Clean I strive for't

Is there no hand of pity that will ease me,
And take this villain from my heart awhile ? [Rises

Hip Alas ! he's gone

Clean A worse supplies his place then,
A weight more ponderous, I cannot follow

Hip O misery of affliction !

Clean They will stay

Till I can come, they must be so good ever,
Though they be ne'er so cruel

My last leave must be taken, think a' that,
And his¹ last blessing given, I will not lose 200
That for a thousand comforts²

Hip That hope's wretched

Clean The unutterable stings of fortune !
All griefs are to be borne save this alone,
This, like a headlong torrent, overturns
The frame of nature
For he that gives us life first, as a father,

¹ Old ed " tms

² Old ed " consorts " See note, p 206

Locks all his natural sufferings in our blood,
 The sorrows that he feels are our heart's too,¹
 They are incorporate to us.

Hip Noble sir!

Clean Let me behold thee² well

Hip Sir!

Clean Thou shouldst be good,
 Or thou'rt a dangerous substance to be lodg'd
 So near the heart of man. 210

Hip What means this, dear sir?

Clean To thy trust only was this blessed secret
 Kindly committed, 'tis destroy'd, thou seest,
 What follows to be thought on't?

Hip Miserable!

Why here's th' unhappiness of woman still,
 That, having forfeited in old times her³ trust,
 Now makes their faiths suspected that are just

Clean What shall I say to all my sorrows then,
 That look for satisfaction? 220

Enter EUGENIA

Eug Ha, ha, ha! cousin

Clean How ill dost thou become this time!

Eug Ha, ha, ha!

Why, that's but your opinion, a young wench
 Becomes the time at all times
 Now, coz, we're even and you be remember'd,

¹ Old ed — "blood, to

The sorrows that he feels, are our heads "

² Old ed " him

³ Old ed. " their "

You left a *strumpet* and a *whore* at home with me,
And such fine field-bed words, which could not cost you
Less than a father.

Clean. Is it come that way?

Eug Had you an uncle, 230
He should go the same way too

Clean O eternity!

What monster is this fiend in labour with?

Eug An ass-colt with two heads, that's she and
you

I will not lose so glorious a revenge,
Not to be understood in't, I betray['d] him,
And now we're even, you'd best keep you so

Clean Is there not poison yet enough to kill me?

Hip O sir, forgive me! it was I betray'd him

Clean How!

Hip I 240

Clean The fellow of my heart! 'twill speed me, then

Hip Her tears that never wept, and mine own pity
E'en cozen'd me together, and stole from me

This secret, which fierce death should not have purchas'd

Clean Nay, then we're at an end, all we are false
ones,

And ought to suffer I was false to wisdom,
In trusting woman, thou wert false to faith,
In uttering of the secret and thou false
To goodness, in deceiving such a pity

We are all tainted some way, but thou worst, 250
And for thy infectious spots ought to die first

[*Offers to kill* EUGENIA.]

Eug. Pray turn your weapon, sir, upon your mistress ,
I come not so ill friended —Rescue, servants !

Re-enter SIMONIDES and Courtiers

Clean. Are you so whorishly provided ?

Sim Yes, sir,

She has more weapons at command than one

Eug Put forward, man , thou art most sure to have
me

Sim I shall be surer, if I keep behind, though

Eug Now, servants, show your loves

Sim I'll show my love, too, afar off

Eug I love to be so courted , woo me there 260

Sim I love to keep good weapons, though [I] ne'er
fought

I'm sharper set within than I am without

Hip O gentlemen ! Cleanthes !

Eug Fight ! upon him !

*Clean*¹ Thy thirst of blood proclaims thee now a
strumpet

Eug 'Tis dainty, next to procreation fitting ,
I'd either be destroying men or getting

Enter Guard

First Officer Forbear, on your allegiance, gentlemen !
He's the duke's prisoner, and we seize upon him
To answer this contempt against the law

¹ Old ed ' *Hip* '

Sim I obey fate in all things

Hip Happy rescue ! 270

Sim I would you'd seized upon him a minute sooner ,
't had saved me a cut finger I wonder how I came by't,
for I never put my hand forth, I'm sure , I think my own
sword did cut it, if truth were known , may be the wire
in the handle I have lived these five-and-twenty years,
and never knew what colour my blood was before I
never durst eat oysters, nor cut peck-loaves

Eug You have shown your spirits, gentlemen , but
you

Have cut your finger

Sim Ay, the wedding-finger too, a pox on't ! 280

Court You'll prove a bawdy bachelor, Sim, to have a
cut upon your finger before you are married

Sim I'll never draw sword again, to have such a jest
put upon me [Exit

ACT V

SCENE I

A Court of Justice

*Enter SIMONIDES and Courtiers, sword and mace
carried before them*

Sim Be ready with your prisoner , we'll sit instantly,
And rise before eleven,¹ or when we please .
Shall we not, fellow ²judges ?

First Court 'Tis committed
All to our power, censure, and pleasure, now
The duke hath made us chief lords of this sessions,
And we may speak by fits, or sleep by turns

Sim Leave that to us , but, whatsoe'er we do,
The prisoner shall be sure to be condemn'd ,
Sleeping or ~~waking~~, we are resolv'd on that,
Before we sit ³ upon him ?

Second Court Make you question
If not ?—Cleanthes ⁴ and an ⁴ enemy ¹
Nay, a concealer of his father too ¹
A wild example in these days of youth

10

¹ Old ed "leaven "

² Old ed "set

³ Old ed " follow "

⁴ Old ed " one

Sim If they were given to follow such examples ,
 But sure I think they are not howsoever,
 'Twas wickedly attempted , that's my judgment,
 And it shall pass whilst I am in power to sit
 Never by prince were such young judges made ,
 But now the cause requires it if you mark it,
 He must make young or none , for all the old ones, 20
 Their fathers,¹ he hath sent a fishing—and
 My father's one, I humbly thank his highness

Enter EUGENIA

First Court Widow^{1 2}

Eug You almost hit my name no[w], gentlemen ,
 You come so wondrous near it, I admire you
 For your judgment

Sim My wife that must be¹ She

Eug My husband goes upon his last hour now

First Court On his last legs, I am sure

*Sim*³ September the seventeenth—

I will not bate an hour on't, and to-morrow 30
 His latest hour's expir'd

Second Court Bring him to judgment ,
 The jury's panell'd, and the verdict given
 Ere⁴ he appears , we have ta'en course for that

Sim And officers to attach the gray young man,
 The youth of fourscore Be of comfort, lady ,
 You⁵ shall no longer bosom January ,

¹ Old ed " her father "

² Old ed " Widdows "

³ The old ed gives this to Eugenia. I have followed Gifford and
 Dyce

⁴ Old ed " Ever "

⁵ Old ed " We."

For that I will take order, and provide
For you a lusty April

Eug The month that ought, indeed,
To go before May

First Court Do as we have said,
Take a strong guard, and bring him into court 40
Lady Eugenia, see this charge perform'd
That, having his life forfeited by the law,
He may relieve his soul

Eug Willingly
From shaven chins never came better justice
Than these ne'er touch'd by razor ¹ [Exit

Sim What you do,
Do suddenly, we charge you, for we purpose
To make but a short sessions —a new business ¹

Enter HIPPOLITA

First Court The fair Hippolita ¹ now what's your suit ²

Hip Alas ¹ I know not how to style you yet,
To call you judges doth not suit your years, 50
Nor heads and beards show more antiquity, ²
Yet sway yourselves with equity and truth,
And I'll proclaim you reverend, ³ and repeat

¹ Old ed "new tucht by reason" This excellent emendation was made by Mason

² "Mr M Mason reads,

*To call you judges doth not suit your years,
Nor heads, and brains show more antiquity*

It is evident that he did not comprehend the sense, which, though ill-conceived and harshly expressed, is,—You have not the years of judges nor do your heads and beards (old copy, *brains*) show more of age —
Gifford ³ Old ed "reverent"

Once in my lifetime I have seen grave heads
Plac'd upon young men's shoulders

Second Court Hark! she flouts us,
And thinks to make us monstrous

Hip Prove not so,
For yet, methinks, you bear the shapes of men,
(Though nothing more than mercy beautifies,¹
To make you appear angels), but if [you] crimson
Your name and power with blood and cruelty, 60
Suppress fair virtue, and enlarge bold² vice,
Both against heaven and nature draw your sword,
Make either will or humour turn the soul³
Of your created greatness, and in that
Oppose all goodness, I must tell you there
You're more than monstrous, in the very act
You change yourselves⁴ to devils

First Court She's a witch,
Hark! she begins to conjure

Sim Time, you see,
Is short, much business now on foot — shall I
Give her her answer?

Second Court None upon the bench 70
More learnedly can do it

Sim He, he, hem! then list.
I wonder at thine impudence, young huswife,
That thou dar'st plead for such a base offender

¹ This is my own emendation. The old ed reads "merely beautifeaus." Gifford and Dyce give "meerly beauty serves," — which to me is unintelligible.

² Old ed "of old."

³ Coxeter and Mason read "scale."

⁴ Old ed "yourselfe."

Conceal a father past his time to die ¹

What son and heir would have done this but he ?

First Court I vow, not I

Hip Because ye are parricides ,
And how can comfort be deriv'd from such
That pity not their fathers ?

Second Court You are fresh and fair , practise young
women's ends ,

When husbands are distress'd, provide them friends 80

Sim I'll set him forward for thee without fee ¹
Some wives would pay for such a courtesy

Hip Times of amazement ! what duty, goodness
dwell ²——

I sought for charity, but knock at hell [Exit

Re-enter EUGENIA, and Guard with LYSANDER

Sim Eugenia come ! Command a second guard
To bring Cleanthes in , we'll not sit long ,
My stomach strikes ³ to dinner

Eug Now, servants, may a lady be so bold
To call your power so low ?

Sim A mistress may ,

¹ The old ed has "forward fee thee, giving the words "without fee" as a stage-direction

² I should prefer "where doth goodness dwell?"

³ Old ed "strives" Gifford suggested "strikes" but printed "strives" Cf pro-dialogue to Day's *Isle of Gulls* — "I lay in bed till past three o'clock, slept out my dinner, and my stomach will toll to supper afore five" So in Heywood's *English Traveller* (Works iv 13) — "I know not how the day goes with you, but my stomach has struck twelve

She can make all things low, then in that language 90
There can be no offence

Eug The time's now come
Of manumissions, take him into bonds,
And I am then at freedom

Second Court This the man!
He hath left off [o'] late to feed on snakes,¹
His beard's turn'd white again

First Court Is't possible these gouty legs danc'd
lately,
And shatter'd in a galliard?

Eug Jealousy
And fear of death can work strange prodigies

Second Court The nimble fencer this, that made me
tear
And traverse 'bout the chamber?

Sim Ay, and gave me 100
Those elbow-healths, the hangman take him for't!
They had almost fetch'd my heart out the Dutch
venny²

I swallow'd pretty well, but the half-pike
Had almost pepper'd³ me, but had I took [long-
sword],
Being swollen, I had cast my lungs out

¹ A recipe for recovering youth Cf Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, iv 4 —
"He's your loving brother, sir, and will tell nobody,
But all he meets, that you have *eat a snake*,
And are grown young, gamesome and rampant"

² Gifford reads "Dutch *what-you call*"

³ Old ed "prepar'd"

*A Flourish*¹ *Enter EVANDER and CRATILUS*

*First*² *Court* Peace, the duke¹

Evan Nay, back³ t' your seats who's that?

Second Court May't please your highness, it is old

Lysander⁴

Evan And brought in by his wife¹ a worthy precedent
Of one that no way would offend the law,

And should not pass away without remark 110

You have been look'd for long

Lys But never fit

To die till now, my lord My sins and I

Have been but newly parted, much ado

I had to get them leave me, or be taught

That difficult lesson, how to learn to die

I never thought there had been such an art,⁵

And 'tis the only discipline we are born for

All studies else⁶ are but as circular lines,

And death the centre where they must all meet

I now can look upon thee, erring woman, 120

And not be vex'd with jealousy, on young men

And no way envy their delicious health,

¹ Old ed. Flourish

Duk A flemish

Enter the Duke

² Old ed. "2"

³ Old ed. "Nay, bathe your seats" The emendation is Gifford's.
In the old edition the line is given to the Second Courtier

⁴ Old ed.

"*Duk* May t please your highness

Sim 'Tis old Lisander

⁵ Old ed. "act (and so later editors)

⁶ Old ed. "as are"

Pleasure, and strength, all which were once mine own,
And mine must be theirs one day.

Evan You have tam'd him

Sim And know how to dispose him, that, my liege,
Hath been before determin'd You confess
Yourself of full age?

Lys Yes, and prepar'd to inherit——

Eug Your place above ¹

Sim Of which the hangman's strength
Shall put him in possession

Lys 'Tis still car'd ²

To take me willing and in mind to die, 130
And such are, when the earth grows weary of them,
Most fit for heaven

Sim The court shall make his mittimus,
And send him thither presently i' th' meantime——

Evan Away ³ to death with him

[*Exit* CRAIILUS with LYSANDER

Enter Guard with CLEANTHES, HIPPOLITA following,
weeping

Sim So I see another person brought to the bar
First Court The arch-malefactor

¹ Old ed

"*Hip* Your place above—Duke—away to death with him

[*Cleanthes* Guard "

I have followed Gifford's arrangement

² Old ed "guard" The words "'Tis still heaven" form part
of Simonides' speech in the old ed

³ See note 1

Second Court The grand offender,¹ the most refractory
To all good order,² 'tis Cleanthes, he——

Sim That would have sons grave fathers, ere their
fathers
Be sent unto their graves

Evan There will be expectation
In your severe proceedings against him, 140
His act being so capital

Sim. Fearful and bloody,
Therefore we charge these women leave the court,
Lest they should swoon³ to hear it

Eug I, in expectation
Of a most happy freedom [Exit.

Hip I, with the apprehension
Of a most sad and desolate widowhood [Exit

First Court We bring him to the bar——

Second Court Hold up your hand, sir

Clean More reverence to the place than to the
persons

To the one I offer up a [spreading]⁴ palm
Of duty and obedience, [a]s to heaven,
Imploring justice, which was never wanting 150
Upon that bench whilst their own fathers sat,
But unto you, my hands contracted thus,

¹ Old ed "offenders

² Old ed "orders

³ Old ed "stand

⁴ "I have inserted *spreading* not merely on account of its completing the verse, but because it contrasts well with *contracted* Whatever the author's word was, it was shuffled out of its place at the press, and appears as a misprint (*showdu*) in the succeeding line"—*Gifford*

As threatening vengeance against murderers,
 For they that kill in thought shed innocent blood.—
 With pardon of¹ your highness, too much passion
 Made me forget your presence, and the place
 I now am call'd to.

Evan All our² majesty
 And power we have to pardon or condemn
 Is now conferr'd on them

Sim And these we'll use
 Little to thine advantage

Clean I expect it 160
 And as to these, I look no mercy from [them],
 And much less mean³ to entreat it. I thus now
 Submit me [to] the emblems of your power,
 The sword and bench but, my most reverend judges,
 Ere you proceed to sentence, (for I know
 You have given me lost,) will you resolve me one thing?

First Court So it be briefly questioned

Second Court Show your humour,⁴
 Day spends itself apace

Clean My lords, it shall⁵
 Resolve me, then, where are your filial tears,
 Your mourning habits, and sad hearts become, 170

¹ Old ed "to

² Old ed "one "

³ "For *mean* the old copy has *shown*, which is pure nonsense it stands, however, in all the editions I have, I believe, recovered the genuine text by adopting *mean*, which was superfluously inserted in the line immediately below it"—*Gifford*

⁴ Old ed "honour "

⁵ i.e. it shall be briefly questioned

That should attend your fathers' funeral ?
Though the stric[t] law (which I will not accuse,
Because a subject) snatch'd away their lives,
It doth not bar you ¹ to lament their deaths .
Or if you cannot spare one sad suspire,
It doth not bid you laugh them to their graves,
Lay subtle trains to antedate their years,
To be the sooner seis'd of their estates
O, time of age ¹ where's that Æneas now,
Who letting all his jewels to the flames , 180
Forgetting country, kindred, treasure, friends,
Fortunes, and all things, save the name of son,
Which you so much forget, godlike ² Æneas,
Who took his bedrid father on his back,
And with that sacred load (to him no burthen)
Hew'd out his way through blood, through fire, through
[arms],
Even all the arm'd streets of bright-burning Troy,
Only to save a father ?

Sim We've no leisure now
To hear lessons read from Virgil , we're past school,
And all this time thy judges

Second Court It is fit 190
That we proceed to sentence

First Court You are the mouth,
And now 'tis fit to open

Sim Justice, indeed,

¹ Old ed "them "

² Old ed 'goe like '

Should ever be close-ear'd and open-mouth'd ,
 That is, to hear a ¹ little, and speak much
 Know ² then, Cleanthes, there is none can be
 A good son and bad ³ subject, for, if princes
 Be call'd the people's fathers, then the subjects
 Are all his sons, and he that flouts the prince
 Doth disobey his father there ye're gone

First Court And not to be recover'd

Sim And again——

200

Second Court If he be gone once, call him not again

Sim I say again, this act of thine expresses
 A double disobedience as our princes
 Are fathers, so they are our sovereigns too ,
 And he that doth rebel 'gainst sovereignty
 Doth commit treason in the height of degree
 And now thou art quite gone

First Court Our brother in commission
 Hath spoke his mind both learnedly and neatly,
 And I can add but little, howsoever,
 It shall send him packing

210

He that begins a fault that wants example
 Ought to be made example for the fault

Clean A fault ¹ no longer can I hold myself
 To hear vice upheld and virtue thrown down
 A fault ¹ judge, I desire, then,⁴ where it lieth,
 In those that are my judges, or in me
 Heaven stand on my side, pity, love, and duty

¹ Old ed "him

³ Old ed "a bad

² Old ed "Low "

⁴ Old ed "judge then, I desire

Sim. Where are they, sir? who sees them but yourself?

Clean Not you, and I am sure 220

You never had the gracious eyes to see them
You think [that] you arraign me, but I hope
To sentence you at the bar

Second Court That would show brave

Clean This were the judgment-seat we [stand at]
now!¹

[Of] the heaviest crimes that ever made up [sin],
Unnaturalness and inhumanity,
You are found foul and guilty, by a jury
Made of your fathers' curses, which have brought
Vengeance impending on you, and I, now,
Am forc'd to pronounce judgment on my judges 230
The common laws of reason and of nature
Condemn you, *ipso facto* you are parricides,
And if you marry, will beget the like,²
Who, when you're grown to full maturity,
Will hurry you, their fathers, to their graves

¹ i.e. O, that this were, &c. But, indeed, this speech is so strangely printed in the quarto that it is almost impossible to guess what the writer really meant. The first three lines stand thus

Clean *This were the judgment seat, we now*
The heaviest crimes that ever made up
Unnaturalness in humanity

Whether the genuine, or, indeed, any sense be elicited by the additions which I have been compelled to make is not mine to say, but certainly some allowance will be made for any temperate endeavour to regulate a text where the words, in too many instances, appear as if they had been shook out of the printer's boxes by the hand of chance. — *Gifford*

² Old ed. "lyar"

Like traitors, you take council from the living,
Of upright judgment you would rob the bench,
(Experience and discretion snatch'd away
From the earth's face,) turn all into disorder,
Imprison virtue, and enfranchise vice,
And put the sword of justice into the hands
Of boys and madmen

240

Sim Well, well, have you done, sir?

Clean I have spoke my thoughts

Sim Then I'll begin and end

Evan 'Tis time I now begin—

Here ¹ your commission ends

Cleanthes, come you ² from the bar Because

I know you're severally disposed, I here

Invite you to an object will, no doubt,

Work in you contrary effects —Music ¹

Loud Music Enter LEONIDES, CREON, LYSANDER,
and other old men

Clean Pray, heaven, I dream not ¹ sure he moves,
talks comfortably,

250

As joy can wish a man If he be chang'd

(Far above from me), he is not ill entreated,

His face doth promise fulness of content,

And glory hath a part in't

Leon O my son ¹

¹ Old ed "Where

² Old ed "you come "

Evan. You that can claim acquaintance with these
lads,
Talk freely

Sim I can see none there that's worth
One hand to you from me

Evan These are thy judges, and by their grave law
I find thee clear, but these delinquents guilty
You must change places, for 'tis so decreed 260
Such just pre-eminence hath thy goodness gain'd,
Thou art the judge now, they the men arraign'd

[*To CLEANTHS.*

First Court Here's fine dancing, gentlemen

Second Court Is thy father amongst them?

*Sim*¹ O a pox ! I saw him the first thing I look'd on
Alive again ! 'sight, I believe now a father
Hath as many lives as a mother

*Clean*² 'Tis full as blessed as 'tis wonderful
O, bring me back to the same law again !
I am fouler than all these, seize on me, officers, 270
And bring me to new sentence

*Sim*³ What's all this?

Clean A fault not to be pardon'd,
Unnaturalness is but sin's⁴ shadow to it

Sim I am glad of that, I hope the case may alter,
And I turn judge again

Evan Name your offence

Clean That I should be so vild
As once to think you cruel

¹ Old ed. "*Clean*"

² Old ed. "*Sim*"

³ Old ed. "*Clean*"

⁴ Old ed. "suns"

Evan Is that all?

Twas pardon'd ere confess'd you that have sons,
If they be worthy, here may challenge them ¹

Creon ² I should have one amongst them, had he
had grace 280

To have retain'd that name

Sim I pray you, father [*Kneels*]

Creon ³ That name, I know, hath been long since
forgot

Sim I find but small comfort in remembering it now

Evan Cleanthes, take your place ⁴ with these grave
father[s],

And read what in that table is inscrib'd

[*Gives him a paper*]

Now set these at the bar,

And read, Cleanthes, to the dread and terror

Of disobedience and unnatural blood

Clean [*reads*] *It is decreed by the grave and learned
council of Epire, that no son and heir shall be held capable
of his inheritance at the age of one-and-twenty, unless he be
at that time as mature* ⁵ *in obedience, manners, and goodness*

Sim Sure I shall never be at full age, then, though I
live to an hundred years, and that's nearer by twenty
than the last statute allowed. 295

First Court A terrible act ¹

Clean *Moreover,* ⁶ *is enacted that all sons aforesaid, whom*

¹ Old ed "my challenge then"

² Old ed "*Cle*"

³ Old ed "*Cle*"

⁴ Old ed "places"

⁵ Old ed "nature"

⁶ In the old ed these words are given to the First Courtier

either this law, or their own grace, shall¹ reduce into the true method of duty, virtue, and affection, [shall appear before us]² and relate their trial and approbation from Cleanthes, the son of Leonides—from me, my lord! 301

Evan From none but you, as fullest Proceed, sir

Clean Whom, for his manifest virtues, we make such judge and censor of youth, and the absolute reference of life and manners.

Sim This is a brave world! when a man should be selling land, he must be learning manners Is't not, my masters?

Re-enter EUGENIA

Eug What's here to do? my suitors at the bar!
The old band³ shines again O miserable! 400
[*She swoons*]

Evan Read the law over to her, 'twill awake her
'Tis one deserves small pity

Clean Lastly, it is ordained, that all such wives now whatsoever, that shall design the[ir] husbands' death, to be soon rid of them, and entertain suitors in their husbands' lifetime—

Sim You had best read that a little louder, for, if anything, that will bring her to herself again, and find her tongue

¹ Old ed "whom it shall"

² "Whether the words which I have inserted convey the author's meaning, or not, may be doubted, but they make some sense of the passage, and thus is all to which they pretend — *Gifford*

³ "So *Gifford* Old ed 'baud'—Qy did the author write '*The old bald sires again*?'"—*Dyce*

Clean Shall not presume, on the penalty of our heavy
displeasure, to marry within ten years after 411

Eug That law's too long by nine years and a half,
I'll take my death upon't, so shall most women

Clean And those incontinent women so offending, to be
judge[d] and censured by Hippolita, wife to Cleanthes

Eug Of all the rest, I'll not be judg[']d by her

Re enter HIPPOLITA

Clean Ah! here she comes Let me prevent thy joys,
Prevent them but in part, and hide the rest,
Thou hast not strength enough to bear them, else

Hip Leonides! [She faints

Clean I fear'd it all this while, 420

I knew 'twas past thy power Hippolita!—

What contrariety is in women's blood!

One faints for spleen and anger, she for grace

Evan Of sons and wives we see the worst and best

M[a]ny future ages yield Hippolitas

Many, but few like thee, Eugenia!

Let no Simonides henceforth have a fame,

But all blest sons live in Cleanthes' name—

[Harsh music within

Ha! what strange kind of melody was that?

Yet give it entrance, whatsoever it be,

430

This day is all devote to liberty

Enter Fiddlers, GNOTHO, Courtezan, Cook, Butler, &c., with the old Women, AGATHA, and one bearing a bridecake for the wedding

Gnoth Fiddlers, crowd ¹ on, crowd on , let no man lay a block in your way.—Crowd on, I say

Evan Stay the crowd awhile , let's know the reason of this jollity

Clean Sirrah, do you know where you are ?

Gnoth Yes, sir , I am here, now here, and now here again, sir

Lys Your hat is too high crown'd, the duke in presence

Gnoth The duke ¹ as he is my sovereign,² I do give him two crowns for it, and that's equal change all the world over as I am lord of the day (being my marriage-day the second) I do advance [my] bonnet Crowd on afore

443

Leon Good sir, a few words, if you will vouchsafe 'em , Or will you be forc'd ?

Gnoth Forced ¹ I would the duke himself would say so

Evan I think he dares, sir and does , if you stay not, You shall be forced

Gnoth I think so, my lord, and good reason too , shall not I stay, when your grace says I shall? I were unworthy to be a bridegroom in any part of your highness's dominions, then will it please you to taste of the wedlock-courtesy ?

453

¹ Fiddle

² A sovereign was a gold coin of the value of ten shillings

Evan O, by no means, sir, you shall not deface
So fair an ornament for me

Gnoth If your grace please to be cakated, say so.

Evan And which might be your fair bride, sir?

Gnoth This is my two for one that must be, [the]
uxor uxoris, the remedy *doloris*, and the very *syceum*
amoris 460

Evan And hast thou any else?

Gnoth I have an older, my lord, for other uses

Clean My lord,

I do observe a strange decorum here
These that do lead this day of jollity
Do march with music and most mirthful cheeks,
Those that do follow, sad and wofully,
Nearer the haviour of a funeral
Than a wedding

Evan 'Tis true pray expound that, sir 470

Gnoth As the destiny of the day falls out, my lord,
one goes¹ to wedding, another goes to hanging, and
your grace, in the due consideration, shall find 'em much
alike, the one hath the ring upon her finger, the other
a halter about her neck *I take thee, Beatrice*, says the
bridegroom, *I take thee, Agatha*, says the hangman, and
both say together, *to have and to hold, till death do part*
us

Evan This is not yet plain enough to my under-
standing 480

¹ Old ed "goes out" (the word "out" being caught from the previous line)

Gnoth If further your grace examine it, you shall find I show myself a dutiful subject, and obedient to the law, myself, with these my good friends, and your good subjects, our old wives, whose days are ripe, and their lives forfeit to the law only myself, more forward than the rest, am already provided of my second choice

Evan O, take heed, sir, you'll run yourself into danger!

If the law finds you with two wives at once,

There's a shrewd premunire 489

Gnoth I have taken leave of the old, my lord I have nothing to say to her, she's going to sea, your grace knows whither, better than I do she has a strong wind with her, it stands full in her poop, when you please, let her disembogue

Cook And the rest of her neighbours with her, whom we present to the satisfaction of your highness' law

Gnoth And so we take our leaves, and leave them to your highness — Crowd on

Evan Stay, stay, you are too forward Will you marry And your wife yet living? 500

Gnoth Alas! she'll be dead before we can get to church If your grace would set her in the way, I would despatch her I have a venture on't, which would return me, if your highness would make a little more haste, two for one

Evan Come, my lords, we must sit again, here's a case

Craves a most serious censure

Cook Now they shall be despatch'd out of the way

Gnoth I would they were gone once , the time goes
away

Evan Which is the wife unto the forward bridegroom ?

Aga I am, and it please your grace 511

Evan Trust me, a lusty woman, able-bodied,
And well-blooded cheeks

Gnoth O, she paints, my lord , she was a chamber-
maid once, and learnt it of her lady

Evan Sure I think she cannot be so old

Aga Truly I think so too, and please your grace

Gnoth Two to one with your grace of that ¹ she's
threescore by the book

Leon Peace, sirrah, you're too loud 520

Cook Take heed, Gnotho ¹ if you move the duke's
patience, tis' an edge-tool , but a word and a blow , he
cuts off your head

Gnoth Cut off my head ¹ away, ignorant ¹ he knows it
cost more in the hair , he does not use to cut off many
such heads as mine I will talk to him too , if he cut off
my head, I'll give him my ears I say my wife is at full
age for the law , the clerk shall take his oath, and the
church-book shall be sworn too

Evan My lords, I leave this censure to you 530

Leon Then first, this fellow does deserve punishment,
For offering up a lusty able woman,
Which may do service to the commonwealth,
Where the law craves one impotent and useless

Creon Therefore to be severely punish'd,

¹ Old ed "Gnothoes "

For thus attempting a second marriage,
His wife yet living

Lys. Nay, to have it trebled ,
That even the day and instant when he should mourn,
As a kind husband, to her funeral,
He leads a triumph to the scorn of it , 540
Which unseasonable joy ought to be punish'd
With all severity

But The fiddles will be in a foul case too, by and by.

Leon Nay, further , it seems he has a venture
Of two for one at his second marriage,
Which cannot be but a conspiracy
Against the former

Gnoth A mess of wise old men !

Lys Sirrah, what can you answer to all these ?

Gnoth Ye are good old men, and talk as age will give
you leave I would speak with the youthful duke him-
self , he and I may speak of things that shall be thirty or
forty years after you are dead and rotten Alas ! you are
here to-day, and gone to sea to-morrow 553

Evan In troth, sir, then I must be plain with you
The law that should take away your old wife from you,
The which I do perceive was your desire,
Is void and frustrate , so for the rest
There has been since another parliament
Has cut it off

Gnoth I see your grace is disposed to be pleasant 560

Evan Yes, you might perceive that , I had not else
Thus dallied with your folles

Gnoth I'll talk further with your grace when I come

back from church ; in the meantime, you know what to do with the old women

Evan Stay, sir, unless in the meantime you mean
I cause a gibbet to be set up in your way,
And hang you at your return

Aga O gracious prince !

Evan Your old wives cannot die to-day by any
Law of mine , for aught I can say to 'em 570
They may, by a new edict, bury you,
And then, perhaps you pay a new fine too

Gnoth This is fine, indeed !

Aga O gracious prince ! may he live a hundred years
more

Cook Your venture is not like to come in to-day,
Gnoth ¹

Gnoth Give me the principal back

Cook Nay, by my troth we'll venture still—and I'm
sure we have as ill a venture of it as you , for we have
taken old wives of purpose, that ² we had thought to have
put away at this market, and now we cannot utter a penny-
worth 582

Evan Well, sirrah, you were best to discharge your
new charge, and take your old one to you

Gnoth O music ! no music, but prove most doleful
trumpet , ³

O bride ! no bride, but thou mayst prove a strumpet ,
O venture ! no venture, I have, for one, now none ,

¹ Old ed ' Gnothoes

² Old ed ' Where *that* "

³ Old ed "trumpets "

O wife ! thy life is sav'd when I hop'd it had been gone
Case up your fruitless strings , no penny, no wedding ,
Case up thy maidenhead , no priest, no bedding 590
Avaunt, my venture ! it can ne'er be restor'd,
Till Ag, my old wife, be thrown overboard
Then come again, old Ag, since it must be so ,
Let bride and venture with woful music go

Cook. What for the bridecake, Gnotho ? ¹

Gnoth Let it be mouldy, now 'tis out of season,
Let it grow out of date, currant, and reason , ²
Let it be chipt and chopt, and given to chickens
No more is got by that than William Dickins
Got by his wooden dishes 600
Put up your plums, as fiddlers put up pipes,
The wedding dash'd, the bridegroom weeps and wipes
Fiddlers, farewell ! and now, without perhaps,
Put up your fiddles as you put up scraps

Lys This passion ³ has given some satisfaction yet
My lord, I think you'll pardon him now, with all the
rest, so they live honestly with the wives they have

Evan O, most freely , free pardon to all

Cook Ay, we have deserved our pardons, if we can live
honestly with such reverend wives, that have no motion
in 'em but their tongues 611

¹ Old ed "Gnothoes "

² "Raisin" seems to have been pronounced as "reason" Falstaff plays upon the word—"If reasons were as common as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I "

³ Sorrowful exclamation

Aga. Heaven bless your grace! you're a just prince

Gnoth All hopes dash'd, the clerk's duties lost,
[My] venture gone, my second wife divorc'd,
And which is worst, the old one come back again!
Such voyages are made now-a-days!

I will weep two salt [ones out] of my¹ nose, besides these two fountains of fresh water. Your grace had been more kind to your young subjects—heaven bless and mend your laws, that they do not gull your poor countrymen [in this] fashion: but I am not the first, by forty, that has been undone by the law. 'Tis but a folly to stand upon terms, I take my leave of your grace, as well as mine eyes will give me leave. I would they had been asleep in their beds when they opened 'em to see this day! Come, Ag, come, Ag

627

[*Exeunt GNOTHO and AGATHA*]

Creon Were not you all my servants?

Cook During your life, as we thought, sir, but our young master turned us away

Creon How headlong, villain, wert thou in thy ruin!

Sim I followed the fashion, sir, as other young men did. If you were² as we thought you had been, we should ne'er have come for this, I warrant you. We did not feed, after the old fashion, on beef and mutton, and such like

Creon Well, what damage or charge you have run yourselves into by marriage, I cannot help, nor deliver

¹ Old ed. "our"

² Old ed. "have"

you from your wives , them you must keep , yourselves
shall again return ¹ to me 640

All We thank your lordship for your love, and must
thank ourselves for our bad bargains [*Exeunt*

Evân Cleanthes, you delay the power of law,
To be inflicted on these misgovern'd men,
That filial duty have so far transgress'd

Clean My lord, I see a satisfaction
Meeting the sentence, even preventing it,
Beating my words back in their utterance
See, sir, there's salt sorrow bringing forth fresh
And new duties, as the sea propagates 650
The elephants ² have found their joints too——
[*They kneel*

Why, here's humility able to bind up
The punishing hand of the severest masters
Much more the gentle fathers'

Sim I had ne'er thought to have been brought so low
as my knees again , but since there's no remedy, fathers,
reverend fathers, as you ever hope to have good sons and
heirs, a handful of pity ! we confess we have deserved
more than we are willing to receive at your hands,
though sons can never deserve too much of their fathers,
as shall appear afterwards 661

Creon And what way can you decline your feeding
now ?

You cannot retire to beeves and muttons, sure

¹ Old ed "retaine."

² Cf Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, c 3, verso —

"Stubborn as an elephant's leg, no bending in her "

Sim Alas ! sir, you see a good pattern for that, now
we have laid by our high and lusty meats, and are down
to our marrow bones already

Creon Well, sir, rise to virtues we'll bind ¹ you now ,
[*They rise*

You that were too weak yourselves to govern,
By others shall be govern'd

Lys Cleanthes, 670

I meet your justice with reconciliation
If there be tears of faith in woman's breast,
I have receiv'd a myriad, which confirms me
To find a happy renovation

Clean Here's virtue's throne,
Which I'll embellish with my dearest jewels
Of love and faith, peace and affection ¹
This is the altar of my sacrifice,
Where daily my devoted knees shall bend
Age honour'd shrine ¹ time still so love you, 680
That I so long may have you in mine eye
Until my memory lose your beginning ¹
For you, great prince, long may your fame survive,
Your justice and your wisdom never die,
Crown of your crown, the blessing of your land,
Which you reach to her from your regent ² hand ¹

Leon O Cleanthes, had you with us tasted
The entertainment of our retirement,
Fear'd and exclaim'd on in your ignorance,
You might have sooner died upon the wonder, 690

¹ Old ed "bound "

² Old ed "regents "

Than any rage or passion for our loss
 A place at hand we were all strangers in,
 So spher'd about with music, such delights,
 [Such] viands and attendance, and once a day
 So cheered with a royal visitant,
 That oftentimes, waking, our unsteady phantasies
 Would question whether we yet liv'd or no,
 Or had possession of that paradise
 Where angels be the guard '—

Evan Enough, Leonides,
 You go beyond the praise, we have our end, 700
 And all is ended well we have now seen
 The flowers and weeds that grew about our court

Sim If these be weeds,¹ I'm afraid I shall wear none
 so good again as long as my father lives

Evan Only this gentleman we did abuse
 With our own bosom we seem'd a tyrant,
 And he our instrument Look, 'tis Cratilus,
 [Discovers CRATILUS
 The man that you suppos'd had now been travell'd,
 Which we gave leave to learn to speak,
 And bring us foreign languages to Greece 710
 All's joy,² I see, let music be the crown
 And set it high, "The good needs fear no law,
 It is his safety, and the bad man's awe"

[*Flourish* *Exeunt*]

¹ Simonides looks ruefully at his handsome apparel (Weeds = garments)

² Old ed. "joyed"

A TRICK TO CATCH THE
OLD ONE.

*A Tricke to Catch the Old one As it hath beëne often in
Action, both at Paules, and the Black Friers Presented before
his Maestie on New-yeares night last Composde by T M
At London Printed by G E and are to be sold by Henry Rockytt,
at the long shop in the Foultrie vnder the Dyall 1608 4to
Second ed , 1616, 4to*

This drama was licensed by Sir George Buc for printing on 7th
October 1607

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

WITGOOD
LUCRE, *his uncle*
HOARD
ONESIPHORUS HOARD, *his brother*
LIMBER, }
KIX, }
LAMPREY, }
SPICHCOCK, }
DAMPIT }
GULF }
FREEDOM *son to MISTRESS LUCRE*
MONEYLOVE
Host
SIR LAUNCELOT
Creditors
Gentlemen
GEORGE
Drawer
Boy
Scrivener
Servants, &c

Courtesan
MISTRESS LUCRE
JOYCE, *niece to HOARD*
LADY FOXSTONE
AUDREY, *servant to DAMPIT*

SCENE (except during the first two scenes of act 1),
LONDON

A TRICK TO CATCH THE OLD ONE.

—o—

ACT I

SCENE I

A Street in a Country Town

Enter WITGOOD

Wit All's gone ¹ still thou'rt a gentleman, that's all, but a poor one, that's nothing What milk brings thy meadows forth now? where are thy goodly uplands, and thy down lands? all sunk into that little pit, lechery Why should a gallant pay but two shillings for his ordinary ¹ that nourishes him, and twenty times two for his brothel ² that consumes him? But where's Long-acre? ³ in my uncle's conscience, which is three years'

¹ See note 2, vol 1 p 189

² A term applied to a harlot

³ The editor of 1816 took this to be the name of Witgood's estate but the term is applied generally to any estate Dyce compares *Lady Alimony*, 1659 — "It will run like Quicksilver over all their husbands Demans, and in very short time make a quick despatch of all his Long-acre" Sig B 3.

voyage about he that sets out upon his conscience ne'er finds the way home again, he is either swallowed in the quicksands of law-quillets, or splits upon the piles of a *præmunire*, yet these old fox-brained and ox-browed uncles have still defences for their avarice, and apologies for their practices, and will thus greet our follies 14

*He that doth his youth expose
To brothel, drink, and danger,
Let him that is his nearest kin
Cheat him before a stranger*

and that's his uncle, 'tis a principle in usury I dare not visit the city there I should be too soon visited by that horrible plague, my debts, and by that means I lose a virgin's love, her portion, and her virtues Well, how should a man live now that has no living? hum,—why, are there not a million of men in the world that only sojourn upon their brain, and make their wits their mercers, and am I but one amongst that million, and cannot thrive upon't? Any trick out of the compass¹ of law now would come happily to me 28

Enter Courtesan

Cour. My love!

Wit. My loathing! hast thou been the secret consumption of my purse, and now comest to undo my last means, my wits? wilt leave no virtue in me, and yet thou ne'er the better?

¹ "Out of the compass of" = not punishable by

Hence, courtesan, round-webb'd tarantula,
That dry'st the roses in the cheeks of youth ¹

Cour I've been true unto your pleasure, and all
your lands

Thrice rack'd was never worth the jewel which
I prodigally gave you, my virginity
Lands mortgag'd may return, and more esteem'd,
But honesty once pawn'd, is ne'er redeem'd 40

Wit Forgive I do thee wrong

To make thee sin, and then to chide thee for't

Cour I know I am your loathing now, farewell

Wit Stay, best invention, stay

Cour I that *have been the secret consumption of your
purse*, shall I stay now to *undo your last means, your
wits? hence, courtesan, away!*

Wit I prithee, make me not mad at my own weapon —
stay (a thing few women can do, I know that, and there-
fore they had need wear stays), be not contrary dost love
me? Fate has so cast ¹ it that all my means I must derive
from thee 52

Cour From me? be happy then,
What lies within the power of my performance
Shall be commanded of thee

Wit Spoke like

An honest drab, i'faith it may prove something,
What trick is not an embryo at first,
Until a perfect shape come over it?

Cour Come, I must help you whereabouts left you?

¹ Planned, devised

I'll proceed 60

Though you beget, 'tis I must help to breed

Speak, what is't? I'd fain conceive it.

Wit So, so, so thou shalt presently take the name and form upon thee of a rich country widow, four hundred a-year valiant,¹ in woods, in bullocks, in barns, and in rye-stacks, we'll to London, and to my covetous uncle

Cour I begin to applaud thee, our states being both desperate, they are soon resolute but how for horses?

Wit Mass, that's true the jest will be of some continuance Let me see, horses now, a bots on 'em! Stay, I have acquaintance with a mad host, never yet bawd to thee, I have rinsed the whoreson's gums in mull-sack many a time and often put but a good tale into his ear now, so it come off cleanly, and there's horse and man for us, I dare warrant thee 75

Cour Arm your wits then
Speedily, there shall want nothing in me,
Either in behaviour, discourse, or fashion,
That shall discredit your intended purpose
I will so artfully disguise my wants, 80
And set so good a courage on my state,
That I will be believ'd

Wit Why, then, all's furnished² I shall go nigh to catch that old fox mine uncle though he make but some amends for my undoing, yet there's some comfort in't, he cannot otherwise choose (though it be but in hope to cozen me again) but supply any hasty want that I bring

¹ Worth

² The editor of 1816 gives the unnecessary correction "finish'd"

to town with me The device well and cunningly carried, the name of a rich widow, and four hundred a-year in good earth, will so conjure up a kind of usurer's love in him to me, that he will not only desire my presence,—which at first shall scarce be granted him, I'll keep off a' purpose,—but I shall find him so officious to deserve, so ready to supply¹ I know the state of an old man's affection so well if his nephew be poor indeed, why, he lets God alone with him, but if he be once rich, then he'll be the first man that helps him 97

Cour 'Tis right the world, for, in these days, an old man's love to his kindred is like his kindness to his wife, 'tis always done before he comes at it

Wit I owe thee for that jest Begone here's all my wealth, prepare thyself, away I'll to mine host with all possible haste, and with the best art, and most profitable form, pour the sweet circumstance into his ear, which shall have the gift to turn all the wax to honey [*Exit Courtesan*]—How no[w]? O, the right worshipful seniors of our country!

*Enter*¹ ONESIPHORUS HOARD, LIMBER, and KIX

Ones H Who's that?

Lim O, the common rioter, take no note of him

Wit You will not see me now, the comfort is, 110
Ere it be long you will scarce see yourselves

[*Aside, and exit*

¹ In the old eds there is no stage-direction, and the prefixes to the speeches of the "right worshipful seniors" are 1, 2, and 3. That 1 is Onesiphorus Hoard is shown by l. 114, "His uncle and my brother," &c. In the last scene of the play Limber and Kix accompany Onesiphorus

Ones H I wonder how he breathes , has consum'd all
Upon that courtesan

Lim We have heard so much

Ones H You've heard all truth His uncle and my
brother

Have been these three years mortal adversaries
Two old tough spirits, they seldom meet but fight,
Or quarrel when 'tis calmest
I think their anger be the very fire
That keeps their age alive

Lim What was the quarrel, sir? 119

Ones H Faith, about a purchase, fetching over a
young heir Master Hoard, my brother, having wasted
much time in beating the bargain, what did me old Lucre,
but as his conscience moved him, knowing the poor gen-
tleman, stept in between 'em, and cozened him himself.

Lim And was this all, sir?

Ones H This was e'en it, sir, yet, for all this, I know
no reason but the match might go forward betwixt his
wife's son and my niece what though there be a dissen-
sion between the two old men, I see no reason it should
put a difference between the two younger, 'tis as natural
for old folks to fall out, as for young to fall in A scholar
comes a-wooing to my niece, well, he's wise, but he's
poor her son comes a-wooing to my niece , well, he's
a fool, but he's rich 134

Lim Ay, marry, sir

Ones H Pray, now, is not a rich fool better than a
poor philosopher?

Lim One would think so, i'faith

Ones H She now remains at London with my brother,

her second uncle, to learn fashions, practise music, the voice between her lips, and the viol¹ between her legs, she'll be fit for a consort² very speedily a thousand good pound is her portion, if she marry, we'll ride up and be merry

144

Kix A match, if it be a match

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II

Another Street in the same Town

Enter WITGOOD, meeting Host

Wit Mine host¹

Host Young master Witgood¹

Wit I have been laying³ all the town for thee

Host Why, what's the news, bully⁴ Had-land?⁵

Wit What geldings are in the house, of thine own?
Answer me to that first

Host Why, man, why?

Wit Mark me what I say I'll tell thee such a tale in thine ear, that thou shalt trust me spite of thy teeth, furnish me with some money wille nille, and ride up with me thyself *contra voluntatem et professionem*

11

¹ i.e. viol-de-gambo (a six stringed violin)

² A pun is intended "Consort" = (1) a company of musicians (2) a husband

³ "Is used in the same sense by Jack Cade in the *Second Part of Henry VI*, act iv scene 10 'These five days have I hid me in these woods, and durst not peep out, for all the country is *lay d* for me'" — *Editor of 1816*

⁴ A familiar term of address

⁵ See note 2, vol 1 p 315.

Host How? let me see this trick, and I'll say thou hast more art than a conjurer

Wit Dost thou joy in my advancement?

Host Do I love sack and ginger?

Wit Comes my prosperity desiredly to thee?

Host Come forfeitures to a usurer, fees to an officer, punks to an host, and pigs to a parson desiredly? why, then, la.

Wit Will the report of a widow of four hundred a-year, boy, make thee leap, and sing, and dance, and come to thy place again? 22

Host Wilt thou command me now? I am thy spirit; conjure me into any shape

Wit I ha' brought her from her friends, turned back the horses by a slight, not so much as one among her six men, goodly large yeomanly fellows, will she trust with this her purpose by this light, all unmanned, regardless of her state, neglectful of vain-glorious ceremony, all for my love O, 'tis a fine little voluble tongue, mine host, that wins a widow ' 31

Host No, 'tis a tongue with a great T, my boy, that wins a widow

Wit Now, sir, the case stands thus good mine host, if thou lovest my happiness, assist me

Host. Command all my beasts i' th' house

Wit Nay, that's not all neither prithee, take truce with thy joy, and listen to me Thou knowest I have a wealthy uncle i' th' city, somewhat the wealthier by my follies the report of this fortune, well and cunningly carried, might be a means to draw some goodness from

the *nsuring* rascal, for I have put her in hope already of some estate that I have either in land or money now, if I be found true in neither, what may I expect but a sudden breach of our love, utter dissolution of the match, and confusion of my fortunes for ever? 46

Host Wilt thou but trust the managing of thy business with me?

Wit With thee? why, will I desire to thrive in my purpose? will I hug four hundred a-year, I that know the misery of nothing? Will that man wish a rich widow that has ne'er a hole to put his head in? With thee, mine host? why, believe it, sooner with thee than with a covey of counsellors 54

Host Thank you for your good report, i'faith, sir and if I stand you not in stead, why then let an host come off *hic et hac hostis*, a deadly enemy to dice, drink, and venery Come, where's this widow?

Wit Hard at Park-end

Host I'll be her serving-man for once 60

Wit Why, there we let off together keep full time my thoughts were striking then just the same number

Host I knew't shall we then see our merry days again?

Wit Our merry nights—which ne'er shall be more seen [*Aside*] [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III

A Street in London

*Enter*¹ *LUCRE and HOARD quarrelling, LAMPREY, SPICHOCK, FREEDOM, and MONEYLOVE, coming between to pacify them*

Lam Nay, good master Lucre, and you, master Hoard, anger is the wind which you're both too much troubled withal

Hoa Shall my adversary thus daily affront² me, ripping up the old wound of our malice, which three summers could not close up? into which wound the very sight of him drops scalding lead instead of balsamum

Luc Why, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard! may I not pass in the state of quietness to mine own house? answer me to that, before witness, and why? I'll refer the cause to honest, even-minded gentlemen, or require the mere indifferences of the law to decide this matter I got the purchase,³ true was't not any man's case? yes will a wise man stand as a bawd, whilst another wipes his nose⁴ of the bargain? no, I answer no in that case

16

Lam Nay, sweet master Lucre

Hoa Was it the part of a friend—no, rather of a Jew,—mark what I say—when I had beaten the bush to the

¹ Old eds "Enter at severall doores"

² *s e* face me

³ A cant term for plunder

⁴ *To wipe a person's nose of* = rob or deprive of See Nares' Glossary.

last bird, or, as I may term it, the price to a pound, then, like a cunning usurer, to come in the evening of the bargain, and glean all my hopes in a minute? to enter, as it were, at the back door of the purchase? for thou ne'er camest the right way by it

Luc Hast thou the conscience to tell me so without any impeachment to thyself? 26

Hoa Thou that canst defeat thy own nephew, Lucre lap his lands into bonds, and take the extremity of thy kindred's forfeitures, because he's a rioter a wastethrift, a brothel-master, and so forth, what may a stranger expect from thee but *vulnera dilacerata*, as the poet says, dilacerate dealing?

Luc Upbraidest thou me with nephew? is all imputation laid upon me? what acquaintance have I with his follies? if he riot, 'tis he must want it, if he surfeit, 'tis he must feel it, if he drab it, 'tis he must lie by't what's this to me? 37

Hoa What's all to thee? nothing, nothing. such is the gulf of thy desire and the wolf of thy conscience but be assured, old Pecunius Lucre, if ever fortune so bless me, that I may be at leisure to vex thee, or any means so favour me, that I may have opportunity to mad thee, I will pursue it with that flame of hate, that spirit of malice, unrepressed wrath, that I will blast thy comforts

Luc Ha, ha, ha!

Lam Nay, master Hoard, you're a wise gentleman——

Hoa I will so cross thee——

Luc And I thee

Hoa So without mercy fret thee——

Luc So monstrously oppose thee—— 50

Hoa Dost scoff at my just anger? O, that I had as much power as usury has over thee !

Luc Then thou wouldst have as much power as the devil has over thee

Hoa Toad !

Luc Aspic !

Hoa Serpent !

Luc. Viper !

Spi Nay, gentlemen, then we must divide you perforce 60

Lam When the fire grows too unreasonable hot, there's no better way than to take off the wood

[*Exeunt LAMPREY and SPICHCOCK, drawing off
LUCRE and HOARD different ways manent
FREEDOM and MONEYLOVE.*]

Free A word, good signior

Mon How now, what's the news?

Free 'Tis given me to understand that you are a rival of mine in the love of mistress Joyce, master Hoard's niece say me ay, say me no ?

Mon Yes, 'tis so

Free Then look to yourself, you cannot live long I'm practising every morning, a month hence I'll challenge you 71

Mon Give me your hand upon't, there's my pledge I'll meet you [*Strikes him, and exit*]

Free O, O ! what reason had you for that, sir, to strike before the month? you knew I was not ready for you,

and that made you so crank ¹ I am not such a coward to strike again, I warrant you My ear has the law of her side, for it burns horribly I will teach him to strike a naked face, the longest day of his life 'slid, it shall cost me some money but I'll bring this box into the chancery
[Exit

SCENE IV

*Another Street**Enter WITGOOD and Host*

Host Fear you nothing, sir, I have lodged her in a house of credit, I warrant you

Wit Hast thou the writings²

Host Firm, sir

Wit Prithce, stay, and behold two the most prodigious rascals that ever slipt into the shape of men, Dampit, sirrah, and young Guif his fellow-caterpillar

Host. Dampit² sure I have heard of that Dampit²

Wit Heard of him² why, man, he that has lost both his ears may hear of him, a famous infamous trampler of time, his own phrase Note him well that Dampit, sirrah, he in the uneven beard and the serge cloark, is the most notorious, usuring blasphemous, atheistical, brothel-vomiting rascal, that we have in these latter times now extant, whose first beginning was the stealing of a masty² dog from a farmer's house

16

Host He looked as if he would obey the commandment[s] well, when he began first with stealing

¹ Spirited, lively² Mastiff

Wit. True the next town he came at, he set the dogs together by th' ears. 20

Host. A sign he should follow the law, by my faith

Wit. So it followed, indeed, and being destitute of all fortunes, staked his masty against a noble,¹ and by great fortune his dog had the day, how he made it up ten shillings, I know not, but his own boast is, that he came to town but with ten shillings in his purse, and now is credibly worth ten thousand pound

Host. How the devil came he by it?

Enter DAMPIT and GULF

Wit. How the devil came he not by it? If you put in the devil once, riches come with a vengeance has been a trampler of the law,² sir, and the devil has a care of his footmen The rogue has spied me now, he nibbled

¹ A gold coin worth 6s 8d

² 'Taylor, the water-poet begins the account of 'A Corrupted Lawyer and a Knauish Vnderstrue, with the following lines

'A hall, a hall, the *trampers* are at hand,
A shifting Master, and as sweetly mand,
His Buckram-beater, one that knowes his ku,
Can write with one hand and receiue with two
The *trampler* is in hast, O cleere the way,
Takes fees with both hands cause he cannot stay,
No matter wheth'r the cause be right or wrong,
So hee be payd for letting out his tongue

A Brood of Cormorants p. 13. *Workes*, 1630

In Brome's *Sparagus Garden*, 1640 (acted 1635), one of the characters is a lawyer named *Trampler*—Dyce Cf. Powell's *Tom of all Trades*, 1631 — But after the civil lawyer is once grown to maturity his way of advancement is more beneficial, more certain, and more easy to attain than is the common lawyer's And they admit few or no solicitors to *trample* between them and the client' (p. 22)

me finely once, too — a pox search you ! [*Aside*] — O, master Dampit ! — the very loins of thee ! [*Aside*] — Cry you mercy, master Gulf, you walk so low, I promise you I saw you not, sir 36

Gulf He that walks low walks safe, the poets tell us

Wit And nigher hell by a foot and a half than the rest of his fellows — [*Aside*

But, my old Harry !

Dam My sweet Theodorus !

Wit 'Twas a merry world when thou camest to town with ten shillings in thy purse 41

Dam. And now worth ten thousand pound, my boy Report it, Harry Dampit, a trampler of time, say, he would be up in a morning, and be here with his serge gown, dashed up to the hams in a cause have his feet stink about Westminster Hall, and come home again, see the galleons, the galleasses,¹ the great armadas of the law, then there be hovy and petty vessels, oars and scullers of the time, there be picklocks of the time too then would I be here, I would trample up and down like a mule now to the judges, *May it please your reverend honourable fatherhoods*, then to my counsellor, *May it please your worshipful patience*, then to the examiner's office, *May it please your mastership's gentleness*, then to one of the clerks, *May it please your worshipful lousiness*, — for I find him scrubbing in his cod-piece, then to the hall again, then to the chamber again — 57

Wit And when to the cellar again ?

¹ Large, heavy galleons

ACT II

SCENE I

*A Room in LUCRE'S House**Enter LUCRE*

Luc My adversary evermore twits me with my nephew, forsooth, my nephew why may not a virtuous uncle have a dissolute nephew? What though he be a brotheller, a wastethrift, a common surfeiter, and, to conclude, a beggar, must sin in him call up shame in me? Since we have no part in their follies, why should we have part in their infamies? For my strict hand toward his mortgage, that I deny not I confess I had an uncle's pen'worth, let me see, half in half, true I saw neither hope of his reclaiming, nor comfort in his being, and was it not then better bestowed upon his uncle than upon one of his aunts?—I need not say bawd, for every one knows what aunt stands for in the last translation 13

Enter Servant.

Now, sir?

Ser There's a country serving man, sir, attends to speak with your worship

into memory there's a widow indeed , ah, that I were a bachelor again !

Host No doubt your worship might do much then , but she's fairly promised to a bachelor already

Luc Ah, what is he, I prithee ?

Host A country gentleman too , one whom your worship knows not, I'm sure , has spent some few follies in his youth, but marriage, by my faith, begins to call him home my mistress loves him, sir, and love covers faults, you know one master Witgood, if ever you have heard of the gentleman

52

Luc Ha ! Witgood, sayst thou ?

Host That's his name indeed, sir , my mistress is like to bring him to a goodly seat yonder , four hundred a-year, by my faith

Luc But, I pray, take me with you ¹

Host Ay, sir

Luc What countryman might this young Witgood be ?

Host A Leicestershire gentleman, sir

60

Luc My nephew, by th' mass, my nephew ? I'll fetch out more of this, I'faith a simple country fellow, I'll work't out of him [*Aside*]—And is that gentleman, sayst thou, presently to marry her ?

Host Faith, he brought her up to town, sir , has the best card in all the bunch for't, her heart ; and I know my mistress will be married ere she go down, nay, I'll swear that, for she's none of those widows that will go down

¹ "Take me with you" was a common expression for "let me understand you."

first, and be married after, she hates that, I can tell you,
sir 70

Luc By my faith, sir, she is like to have a proper gentleman, and a comely, I'll give her that gift

Host Why, does your worship know him, sir?

Luc I know him? does not all the world know him? can a man of such exquisite qualities be hid under a bushel?

Host Then your worship may save me a labour, for I had charge given me to inquire after him

Luc Inquire of him? If I might counsel thee, thou shouldst ne'er trouble thyself further, inquire of him of no more but of me, I'll fit thee I grant he has been youthful, but is he not now reclaimed? mark you that, sir has not your mistress, think you, been wanton in her youth? if men be wags, are there not women wagtails?¹

Host No doubt, sir 85

Luc Does not he return wisest that comes home whipt with his own follies?

Host Why, very true, sir

Luc The worst report you can hear of him, I can tell you, is that he has been a kind gentleman, a liberal, and a worthy who but lusty Witgood, thrice-noble Witgood!

Host Since your worship has so much knowledge in him, can you resolve me, sir, what his living might be? my duty binds me, sir, to have a care of my mistress' estate, she has been ever a good mistress to me, though I say it many wealthy suitors has she nonsuited for his

¹ 'Wagtail' was a term for a wanton woman

sake, yet, though her love be so fixed, a man cannot tell whether his non-performance may help to remove it, sir, he makes us believe he has lands and living 99

Luc Who, young master Witgood? why, believe it, he has as goodly a fine living out yonder,—what do you call the place?

Host Nay, I know not, i'faith

Luc Hum—see, like a beast, if I have not forgot the name—pooh¹ and out yonder again, goodly grown woods and fair meadows pax¹ on't, I can ne'er hit of that place neither he² why, he's Witgood of Witgood Hall, he an unknown thing¹

Host Is he so, sir? To see how rumour will alter¹ trust me, sir, we heard once he had no lands, but all lay mortgaged to an uncle he has in town here 111

Luc Push,² 'tis a tale, 'tis a tale

Host I can assure you, sir, 'twas credibly reported to my mistress

Luc Why, do you think, i'faith, he was ever so simple to mortgage his lands to his uncle? or his uncle so unnatural to take the extremity of such a mortgage?

Host That was my saying still, sir

Luc Pooh, ne'er think it

Host Yet that report goes current

Luc Nay, then you urge me
Cannot I tell that best that am his uncle? 120

Host How, sir? what have I done¹

Luc Why, how now¹ in a swoon, man?

¹ The affected pronunciation of ' pox '

² Push

Host Is your worship his uncle, sir?

Luc Can that be any harm to you, sir?

Host I do beseech you, sir, do me the favour to conceal it what a beast was I to utter so much¹ pray, sir, do me the kindness to keep it in, I shall have my coat pulled o'er my ears, an't should be known; for the truth is, an't please your worship, to prevent much rumour and many suitors, they intend to be married very suddenly and privately

131

Luc And dost thou think it stands with my judgment to do them injury? must I needs say the knowledge of this marriage comes from thee? am I a fool at fifty four? do I lack subtlety now, that have got all my wealth by it? There's a leash of angels for thee come, let me woo thee speak where lie they?

Host So I might have no anger, sir——

Luc Passion of me, not a jot prithee, come

Host I would not have it known, sir,¹ it came by my means

141

Luc Why, am I a man of wisdom?

Host I dare trust your worship, sir, but I'm a stranger to your house, and to avoid all intelligencers, I desire your worship's ear

Luc This fellow's worth a matter of trust [*Aside*]—Come, sir [*Host whispers to him*] Why, now thou'rt an honest lad—Ah, sirrah, nephew¹

Host Please you, sir, now I have begun with your

¹ So ed. 2 — Not in ed. 1

worship, when shall I attend for your advice upon that doubtful point? I must come warily now 151

Luc Tut, fear thou nothing,

To-morrow's evening shall resolve the doubt

Host The time shall cause my attendance.

Luc Fare thee well [*Exit Host*].—There's more true honesty in such a country serving-man than in a hundred of our cloak companions¹ I may well call 'em companions, for since blue² coats have been turned into cloaks, we can scarce know the man from the master — George¹ 160

Enter GEORGE

Geo Anon, sir

Luc List hither [*whispers*] keep the place secret commend me to my nephew. I know no cause, tell him, but he might see his uncle

Geo I will, sir

Luc And, do you hear, sir?

Take heed to use him with respect and duty

Geo Here's a strange alteration, one day he must be turned out like a beggar, and now he must be called in like a knight [*Aside, and exit* 170

Luc Ah, sirrah, that rich widow '—four hundred a-year¹ beside, I hear she lays claim to a title of a hundred more This falls unhappily that he should bear a grudge to me now, being likely to prove so rich what is't, trow, that he makes me a stranger for? Hum,—I hope he

¹ Knaves, rogues

² Blue coats were worn by serving-men

³ I think you

has not so much wit to apprehend that I cozened him ' he deceives me then Good heaven, who would have thought it would ever have come to this pass ' yet he's a proper gentleman, i'faith, give him his due, marry, that's his mortgage, but that I ne'er mean to give him. I'll make him rich enough in words, if that be good. and if it come to a piece of money, I will not greatly stick for't, there may be hope some of the widow's lands, too, may one day fall upon me, if things be carried wisely 184

Re-enter GEORGE

Now, sir, where is he?

Geo He desires your worship to hold him excused, he has such weighty business, it commands him wholly from all men

Luc Were those my nephew's words?

Geo Yes, indeed, sir 190

Luc When men grow rich, they grow proud too, I perceive that, he would not have sent me such an answer once within this twelvemonth see what 'tis when a man's come to his lands ' [*Aside*]—Return to him again, sir, tell him his uncle desires his company for an hour, I'll trouble him but an hour, say, 'tis for his own good, tell him and, do you hear, sir? put *worship* upon him go to, do as I bid you, he's like to be a gentleman of worship very shortly

Geo This is good sport, i'faith [*Aside, and exit* 200

Luc Troth, he uses his uncle discourteously now can he tell what I may do for him? goodness may come from me in a minute, that comes not in seven year again

he knows my humour , I am not so usually good , 'tis no small thing that draws kindness from me, he may know that and ¹ he will The chief cause that invites me to do him most good is the sudden astonishing of old Hoard, my adversary · how pale his malice will look at my nephew's advancement ! with what a dejected spirit he will behold his fortunes, whom but last day he proclaimed rioter, penurious makeshift, despised brothel-master !
Ha, ha ! 'twill do me more secret joy than my last purchase, more precious comfort than all these widow's revenues

214

Re-enter GEORGE, showing in WITGOOD

Now, sir ?

Geo With much entreaty he's at length come, sir
[*Exit*

Luc O, nephew, let me salute you, sir ¹ you're welcome, nephew

Wit Uncle, I thank you

Luc You've a fault, nephew , you're a stranger here
Well, heaven give you joy ¹

221

Wit Of what, sir ?

Luc Hah, we can hear ¹
You might have known your uncle's house, i'faith,
You and your widow go to, you were to blame ,
If I may tell you so without offence

Wit How could you hear of that, sir ?

Luc O, pardon me ¹

'Twas your will to have kept it¹ from me, I perceive
now

Wit Not for any defect of love, I protest, uncle.

Luc O, 'twas unkindness, nephew! *hie, hie, hie.* 230

Wit I am sorry you take it in that sense, sir

Luc Pooh, you cannot colour it, i'faith, nephew

Wit Will you but hear what I can say in my just
excuse, sir?

Luc Yes, faith, will I, and welcome

Wit You that know my danger i' th' city, sir, so
well, how great my debts are, and how extreme my
creditors, could not out of your pure judgment, sir, have
wished us hither

Luc Mass, a firm reason indeed 240

Wit Else, my uncle's house! why, 't had been the
only make-match

Luc Nay, and thy credit

Wit My credit? nay, my countenance push,² nay, I
know, uncle, you would have wrought it so by your wit,
you would have made her believe in time the whole
house had been mine

Luc Ay, and most of the goods too

Wit La, you there! well, let 'em all prate what they
will, there's nothing like the bringing of a widow to one's
uncle's house 251

Luc Nay, let nephews be ruled as they list, they shall
find their uncle's house the most natural place when all's
done

¹ So ed 2 — Ed 1 'it kept'

² Push

Wit There they may be bold

Luc Life, they may do anything there, man, and fear neither beadle nor somner ¹ an uncle's house ¹ a very Cole-Harbour ² Sirrah, I'll touch thee near now hast thou so much interest in thy widow, that by a token thou couldst presently send for her ? 260

Wit Troth, I think I can, uncle

Luc Go to, let me see that

Wit Pray, command one of your men hither, uncle

Luc George ¹

Re-enter GEORGE

Geo Here, sir

Luc Attend my nephew [*WITGOOD whispers to GEORGE, who then goes out*]—I love a' life ³ to prattle with a rich widow, 'tis pretty, methinks, when our tongues go together and then to promise much and perform little, I love that sport a' life, i'faith yet I am in the mood now to do my nephew some good, if he take me handsomely [*Aside*]—What, have you despatched ?

Wit I ha' sent, sir 273

Luc Yet I must condemn you of unkindness, nephew.

Wit Heaven forbid, uncle ¹

Luc Yes, faith, must I Say your debts be many, your creditors importunate, yet the kindness of a thing is

¹ " *Summoner* signifieth one used to call or cite a man to any court " —Cowell's *Interpreter*

² A corruption of *Cold Harbour*, a mansion (in Dowgate Ward) where debtors and vagabonds found sanctuary

³ As my life.

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all, nephew you might have sent me close word on't, without the least danger or prejudice to your fortunes.

Wit Troth, I confess it, uncle, I was to blame there, but, indeed, my intent was to have clapped it up suddenly, and so have broke forth like a joy to my friends, and a wonder to the world beside, there's a trifle of a forty pound matter toward the setting of me forth, my friends should ne'er have known on't, I meant to make shift for that myself 286

Luc How, nephew? let me not hear such a word again, I beseech you shall I be beholding¹ to you?

Wit To me? Alas, what do you mean, uncle?

Luc I charge you, upon my love, you trouble nobody but myself 291

Wit You've no reason for that, uncle

Luc Troth, I'll ne'er be friends with you while you live, and² you do

Wit Nay, and you say so, uncle, here's my hand, I will not do't

Luc Why, well said¹ there's some hope in thee when thou wilt be ruled, I'll make it up fifty, faith, because I see thee so reclaimed Peace, here comes my wife with Sam, her t'other husband's son 300

Enter MISTRESS LUCRE and FREEDOM

Wit Good aunt

Free Cousin Witgood, I rejoyce in my salute, you're

¹ Beholden

² If

most welcome to this noble city, governed with the sword in the scabbard

Wit And the wit in the pommel [*Aside*]—Good master Sam Freedom, I return the salute

Luc. By the mass, she's coming, wife , let me see now how thou wilt entertain her

Mis L I hope I am not to learn, sir, to entertain a widow , 'tis not so long ago since I was one myself 310

Enter Courtesan

Wit Uncle —

Luc She's come indeed

Wit My uncle was desirous to see you, widow, and I presumed to invite you

Court The presumption was nothing, master Witgood is this your uncle, sir ?

Luc Marry am I, sweet widow , and his good uncle he shall find me , ay, by this smack that I give thee [*kisses her*], thou'rt welcome —Wife, bid the widow welcome the same way again 320

Free I am a gentleman now too by my father's occupation, and I see no reason but I may kiss a widow by my father's copy truly, I think the charter is not against it, surely these are the words, *The son once a gentleman may revel it, though his father were a dauber* , 'tis about the fifteenth page I'll to her

[*Aside, then offers to kiss the Courtesan, who repulses him*

Luc You're not very busy now , a word with thee, sweet widow

Free Coads-nigs ¹ I was never so disgraced since the hour my mother whipt me 330

Luc Beside, I have no child of mine own to care for, she's my second wife, old, past bearing clap sure to him, widow, he's like to be my heir, I can tell you

Court Is he so, sir?

Luc He knows it already, and the knave's proud on't jolly rich widows have been offered him here i' th' city, great merchants' wives, and do you think he would once look upon 'em? forsooth, he'll none you are beholding to him i' th' country, then, ere we could be nay, I'll hold a wager, widow, if he were once known to be in town, he would be presently sought after, nay, and happy were they that could catch him first 342

Court I think so

Luc O, there would be such running to and fro, widow! he should not pass the streets for 'em he'd be took up in one great house or other presently faugh! they know he has it, and must have it You see this house here, widow, this house and all comes to him, goodly rooms, ready furnished, ceiled with plaster of Paris, and all hung about² with cloth of arras —Nephew 350

Wit Sir

Luc Show the widow your house, carry her into all the rooms, and bid her welcome —You shall see, widow —Nephew, strike all sure above and³ thou beest a good boy,—ah! [*Aside to Witgood*]

¹ A vulgar meaningless oath Cf Marston's *Second Part of Anton and Mell*, iv 3, "Gods neaks, he has wrong, that he has"

² So ed 2 —Ed 1 "above"

³ If

Wit Alas, sir, I know not how she would take it ¹

Luc. The right way, I warrant t'ye a pox, art an ass ?
would I were in thy stead ¹ get you up, I am ashamed of
you. [*Exeunt WITGOOD and Courtesan*] So let 'em
agree as they will now many a match has been struck
up in my house a' this fashion let 'em try all manner of
ways, still there's nothing like an uncle's house to strike
the stroke in I'll hold my wife in talk a little —Now,
Jenny, your son there goes a-wooing to a poor gentle-
woman but of a thousand [pound] portion see my
nephew, a lad of less hope, strikes at four hundred a-year
in good rubbish 367

Miss L Well, we must do as we may, sir

Luc I'll have his money ready told for him again ¹ he
come down let me see, too,—by th' mass, I must
present the widow with some jewel, a good piece of ²
plate, or such a device, 'twill hearten her on well I have
a very fair standing cup, and a good high standing cup
will please a widow above all other pieces [*Exit*

Mis L Do you mock us with your nephew ?—I have
a plot in my head, son,—i'faith, husband, to cross you

Free Is it a tragedy plot, or a comedy plot, good
mother ?

Mis L 'Tis a plot shall vex him I charge you, of
my blessing, son Sam, that you presently withdraw the
action of your love from master Hoard's niece 381

Free How, mother ?

¹ Against

² So ed 2 —Ed 1 "a."

Mis L Nay, I have a plot in my head, i'faith. Here, take this chain of gold, and this fair diamond dog me the widow home to her lodging, and at thy best opportunity fasten 'em both upon her. Nay, I have a reach I can tell you thou art known what thou art, son, among the right worshipful, all the twelve companies.

Free Truly, I thank 'em for it

Mis L He? he's a scab to thee and so certify her thou hast two hundred a-year of thyself, beside thy good parts—a proper person and a lovely. If I were a widow, I could find in my heart to have thee myself, son, ay, from 'em all

394

Free Thank you for your good will, mother, but, indeed, I had rather have a stranger and if I woo her not in that violent fashion, that I will make her be glad to take these gifts ere I leave her, let me never be called the heir of your body

Mis L Nay, I know there's enough in you, son, if you once come to put it forth

Free I'll quickly make a bolt or a shaft on't ¹

402

[*Exeunt*]

¹ *To make a bolt or a shaft of a thing* occurs in Ray's Proverbs. The meaning of the phrase (which occurs in *Merry Wives*, iii. 4) is to take the risk, succeed or fail. *Shafts* were sharp pointed arrows, *bolts* were blunted at the extremity

SCENE II

A Street

Enter HOARD and MONEYLOVE.

Mon. Faith, master Hoard, I have bestowed many months in the suit of your niece, such was the dear love I ever bore to her virtues but since she hath so extremely denied me, I am to lay out for my fortunes elsewhere

Hoa Heaven forbid but you should, sir ' I ever told you my niece stood otherwise affected

Mon I must confess you did, sir, yet, in regard of my great loss of time, and the zeal with which I sought your niece, shall I desire one favour of your worship? 10

Hoa In regard of those two, 'tis hard but you shall, sir

Mon I shall rest grateful 'tis not full three hours, sir, since the happy rumour of a rich country widow came to my hearing

Hoa How? a rich country widow?

Mon Four hundred a-year landed.

Hoa Yea?

Mon Most firm, sir, and I have learnt her lodging here my suit begins, sir, if I might but entreat your

worship to be a countenance for me, and speak a good word (for your words will pass), I nothing doubt but I might set fair for the widow, nor shall your labour, sir, end altogether in thanks, two hundred angels—— 24

Hoa. So, so what suitors has she?

Mon There lies the comfort, sir, the report of her is yet but a whisper, and only solicited by young riotous Witgood, nephew to your mortal adversary

Hoa Ha! art certain he's her suitor?

Mon Most certain, sir, and his uncle very industrious to beguile the widow, and make up the match 31

Hoa So very good

Mon Now, sir, you know this young Witgood is a spendthrift, dissolute fellow

Hoa A very rascal

Mon A midnight surfeiter

Hoa The spume of a brothel-house

Mon True, sir, which being well told in your worship's phrase, may both heave him out of her mind, and drive a fair way for me to the widow's affections 40

Hoa Attend me about five

Mon With my best care, sir [*Exit*

Hoa Fool, thou hast left thy treasure with a thief,
To trust a widower with a suit in love!
Happy revenge, I hug thee! I have not only the means
laid before me, extremely to cross my adversary, and
confound the last hopes of his nephew, but thereby to
enrich my state, augment my revenues, and build mine
own fortunes greater ha, ha!
I'll mar your phrase, o'erturn your flatteries,

Undo your windings, policies, and plots, 50
 Fall like a secret and despatchful plague
 On your secured comforts Why, I am able
 To buy three of Lucre, thrice outbid him,
 Let my out-monies be reckoned and all

Enter three of WITGOOD'S Creditors

First C I am glad of this news

Sec C So are we, by my faith

Thurd C Young Witgood will be a gallant again
 now

Hoa Peace [Listening

First C I promise you, master Cockpit, she's a mighty
 rich widow 61

Sec C Why, have you ever heard of her?

First C Who? widow Medler? she lies open to much
 rumour

Thurd C Four hundred a-year, they say, in very good
 land

First C Nay, take't of my word, if you believe that,
 you believe the least

Sec C And to see how close he keeps it!

First C O, sir, there's policy in that, to prevent better
 suitors 71

Thurd C He owes me a hundred pound, and I protest
 I ne'er looked for a penny

First C He little dreams of our coming, he'll wonder
 to see his creditors upon him

[*Exeunt Creditors*

ACT III

SCENE I

WITGOOD'S *Lodging*

Enter WITGOOD and three Creditors

Wit. Why, alas, my creditors, could you find no other time to undo me but now? rather your malice appears in this than the justness of the debt

First C Master Witgood, I have forborne my money long

Wit I pray, speak low, sir what do you mean?

Sec C We hear you are to be married suddenly to a rich country widow

Wit What can be kept so close but you creditors hear on't! well, 'tis a lamentable state, that our chiefest afflictors should first hear of our fortunes. Why, this is no good course, i'faith, sirs if ever you have hope to be satisfied, why do you seek to confound the means that should work it? there's neither piety, no, nor policy in that. Shine favourably now why, I may rise and spread again, to your great comforts

16

First C He says true, i'faith

Wit Remove me ¹ now, and I consume for ever.

Sec C Sweet gentleman ¹

Wit How can it thrive which from the sun you
sever?

Third C. It cannot, indeed

Wit O, then, show patience ¹ I shall have enough
To satisfy you all

First C Ay, if we could
Be content, a shame take us ¹

Wit For, look you ,
I am but newly sure ² yet to the widow,
And what a rend might this discredit make ¹
Within these three days will I bind you lands
For your securities.

First C No, good master Witgood
Would 'twere as much as we dare trust you with ¹

Wit I know you have been kind , however, now, 30
Either by wrong report or false incitement,
Your gentleness is injured in such
A state as this a man cannot want foes
If on the sudden he begin to rise,
No man that lives can count his enemies
You had some intelligence, I warrant ye,
From an ill-willer

Sec C Faith, we heard you brought up a rich widow,
sir, and were suddenly to marry her

¹ " This and the next speech of Witgood's form a couplet and are, I am inclined to think, a quotation "—*Editor of 1816*

² Affianced — " Accordailles The betrothing or making sure of a man and woman together " — *Cotgrave*

Wit Ay, why there it was I knew 'twas so · but since you are so well resolved ¹ of my faith toward you, let me be so much favoured of you, I beseech you all—— 42

All. O, it shall not need, i'faith, sir !——

Wit As to lie still awhile, and bury my debts in silence, till I be fully possessed of the widow , for the truth is—I may tell you as my friends——

All. O, O, O !——

Wit I am to raise a little money in the city, toward the setting forth of myself, for mine own credit and your comfort , if my former debts should be divulged, all hope of my proceedings were quite extinguished 51

First C Do you hear, sir ? I may deserve your custom hereafter , pray, let my money be accepted before a stranger's here's forty pound I received as I came to you . if that may stand you in any stead, make use on't. [*Offers him money, which he at first declines*] Nay, pray, sir , 'tis at your service [*Aside to Witgood*

Wit You do so ravish me with kindness, that I am constrain'd to play the maid, and take it

First C Let none of them see it, I beseech you

Wit Faugh ! 60

First C. I hope I shall be first in your remembrance After the marriage rites

Wit Believe it firmly

First C So —What, do you walk, sirs ?

Sec C I go —Take no care, sir, for money to furnish you , within this hour I'll send you sufficient. [*Aside to*

¹ Convinced.

WITGOOD]—Come, master Cockpit, we both stay for you.

Thurd C I ha' lost a ring, i'faith, I'll follow you presently [*exeunt First and Second Creditors*]—but you shall find it, sir, I know your youth and expenses have disfurnished you of all jewels there's a ruby of twenty pound price, sir, bestow it upon your widow. [*Offers him the ring, which he at first declines*]—What, man 'twill call up her blood to you, beside, if I might so much work with you, I would not have you beholding to those bloodsuckers for any money

76

Wit Not I, believe it

Thurd C They're a brace of cut-throats

Wit. I know 'em

Thurd C Send a note of all your wants to my shop, and I'll supply you instantly

Wit Say you so? why, here's my hand then, no man living shall do't but thyself

Thurd C Shall I carry it away from 'em both, then?

Wit I'faith, shalt thou

Thurd C Troth, then, I thank you, sir

86

Wit Welcome, good master Cockpit [*Exit Third Creditor*]—Ha, ha, ha ' why, is not this better now than lying a-bed? I perceive there's nothing conjures up wit sooner than poverty, and nothing lays it down sooner than wealth and lechery this has some savour yet. O that I had the mortgage from mine uncle as sure in possession as these trifles ' I would forswear brothel at noonday, and muscadine ¹ and eggs at midnight

¹ A rich, sweet-smelling wine The mixture of muscadine and eggs
w s taken as an aphrodisiac

Court [*within*] Master Witgood, where are you?

Wit Holla!

96

Enter Courtesan.

Court. Rich news?

Wit Would 'twere all in plate!

Court There's some in chains and jewels I am so haunted with suitors, master Witgood, I know not which to despatch first

Wit You have the better term,¹ by my faith.

Court Among the number

One master Hoard, an ancient gentleman

Wit Upon my life, my uncle's adversary

Court It may well hold so, for he rails on you,
Speaks shamefully of him

Wit As I could wish it

Court I first denied him, but so cunningly,
It rather promis'd him assured hopes,
Than any loss of labour

Wit Excellent!

110

Court I expect him every hour with gentlemen,
With whom he labours to make good his words,
To approve you riotous, your state consum'd
Your uncle——

Wit Wench, make up thy own fortunes now, do
thyself a good turn once in thy days he's rich in money,
movables, and lands, marry him he's an old doating

¹ Profligate persons (*termers*, as they were called) resorted to the metropolis in term time Witgood is playing on the word *suitors*

fool, and that's worth all, marry him 'twould be a great comfort to me to see thee do well, i'faith, marry him. 'twould ease my conscience well to see thee well bestowed; I have a care of thee, i'faith 121

Court Thanks, sweet master Witgood

Wit I reach at farther happiness first, I am sure it can be no harm to thee, and there may happen goodness to me by it prosecute it well, let's send up for our wits, now we require their best and most pregnant assistance.

Court Step in, I think I hear 'em [*Exeunt*

Enter HOARD and Gentlemen, with the Host as Servant.

Hoa Art thou the widow's man? by my faith, sh'as a company of proper men then

Host I am the worst of six, sir, good enough for blue¹ coats 131

Hoa Hark hither I hear say thou art in most credit with her

Host Not so, sir

Hoa Come, come, thou'rt modest there's a brace of royals,² prithee, help me to th' speech of her.

[*Gives him money*

Host I'll do what I may, sir, always saving myself harmless

Hoa Go to, do't, I say, thou shalt hear better from me 140

Host Is not this a better place than five mark a-year

¹ See note 2, p. 273

² Gold pieces worth fifteen shillings

standing wages? Say a man had but three such clients in a day, methinks he might make a poor living on't; beside, I was never brought up with so little honesty to refuse any man's money, never what gulls there are a' this side the world! now know I the widow's mind, none but my young master comes in her clutches ha, ha, ha!

[*Aside, and exit*

Hoa Now, my dear gentlemen, stand firmly to me,
You know his follies and my worth

First G We do, sir

Sec G But, master Hoard, are you sure he is not i'
th' house now? 151

Hoa Upon my honesty, I chose this time
A' purpose, fit the spendthrift is abroad
Assist me, here she comes

Enter Courtesan

Now, my sweet widow

Court You're welcome, master Hoard

Hoa Despatch, sweet gentlemen, despatch —
I am come, widow, to prove those my words
Neither of envy sprung nor of false tongues,
But such as their¹ deserts and actions
Do merit and bring forth, all which these gentlemen,
Well known, and better reputed, will confess 161

Court I cannot tell
How my affections may dispose of me,
But surely if they find him so desertless,

¹ Lucre s and Witgood s.

They'll have that reason to withdraw themselves.
 And therefore, gentlemen, I do entreat you,
 As you are fair in reputation
 And in appearing form, so shine in truth
 I am a widow, and, alas, you know,
 Soon overthrown 'tis a very small thing 170
 That we withstand, our weakness is so great
 Be partial unto neither, but deliver,
 Without affection, your opinion

Hoa And that will drive it home

Court Nay, I beseech your silence, master Hoard,
 You are a party

Hoa Widow, not a word

First G The better first to work you to belief,
 Know neither of us owe him flattery,
 Nor t'other malice, but unbribed censure,¹
 So help us our best fortunes!²

Court It suffices 180

First G That Witgood is a riotous, undone man,
 Imperfect both in fame and in estate,
 His debts wealthier than he, and executions
 In wait for his due body, we'll maintain
 With our best credit and our dearest blood

Court Nor land nor living, say you? Pray, take
 heed

You do not wrong the gentleman

¹ Judgment

² "The declaration of this gentleman somewhat resembles the oath taken by grand jurymen respecting their presentations, and was probably formed on that model"—*Editor of 1816*

First G What we speak

Our lives and means are ready to make good

Court. Alas, how soon are we poor souls beguil'd !

Sec. G And for his uncle——

Hoa Let that come to me

190

His uncle[s] a severe extortioner ,

A tyrant at a forfeiture ; greedy of others'

Miseries , one that would undo his brother,

Nay, swallow up his father, if he can,

Within the fathoms of his conscience

First G Nay, believe it, widow,

You had not only match'd yourself to wants,

But in an evil and unnatural stock

Hoa Follow hard, gentlemen, follow hard

[*Aside to Gent*

Court Is my love so deceiv'd ? Before you all

I do renounce him , on my knees I vow [*Kneeling* 201

He ne'er shall marry me

Wit [*looking in*] Heaven knows he never meant it !

[*Aside*

Hoa There take her at the bound

[*Aside to Gent*

First G Then, with a new and pure affection ,

Behold yon gentleman , grave, kind, and rich,

A match worthy yourself esteeming him,

You do regard your state

Hoa I'll make her a jointure, say

[*Aside to Gent.*

First G He can join land to land, and will possess you

Of what you can desire

Sec G. Come, widow, come.

210

Court The world is so deceitful¹

First G There 'tis deceitful,

Where flattery, want, and imperfection lies,

But none of these in him push¹¹

Court Pray, sir——

First G Come, you widows are ever most backward when you should do yourselves most good, but were it to marry a chin not worth a hair now, then you would be forward enough Come, clap hands, a match

Hoa With all my heart, widow [*HOARD and Courtesan shake hands*]—Thanks, gentlemen

I will deserve your labour, and [*to Courtesan*] thy love

Court Alas, you love not widows but for wealth¹

I promise you I ha' nothing, sir

Hoa Well said, widow,

222

Well said, thy love is all I seek, before

These gentlemen

Court Now I must hope the best.

Hoa My joys are such they want to be express'd

Court But, master Hoard, one thing I must remember you of, before these gentlemen, your friends how shall I suddenly avoid the loathed soliciting of that perjured Witgood, and his tedious, dissembling uncle? who this very day hath appointed a meeting for the same purpose too, where, had not truth come forth, I had been undone, utterly undone¹

232

Hoa What think you of that, gentlemen?

First G. 'Twas well devised.

Hoa Hark thee, widow train out young Witgood single, hasten him thither with thee, somewhat before the hour, where, at the place appointed, these gentlemen and myself will wait the opportunity, when, by some slight removing him from thee, we'll suddenly enter and surprise thee, carry thee away by boat to Cole-Harbour,¹ have a priest ready, and there clap it up instantly How likest it, widow? 242

Court In that it pleaseth you, it likes me well

Hoa I'll kiss thee for those words. [*Kisses her*]—
Come, gentlemen,

Still must I live a suitor to your favours,
Still to your aid beholding

First G We're engag'd, sir,
'Tis for our credits now to see't well ended

Hoa 'Tis for your honours, gentlemen, nay, look to't
Not only in joy, but I in wealth excel
No more sweet widow, but, sweet wife, farewell 250

Court Farewell, sir [*Exeunt HOARD and Gentlemen*]

Re-enter WITGOOD

Wit O for more scope! I could laugh eternally! Give you joy, mistress Hoard, I promise your fortune was good, forsooth, you've fell upon wealth enough, and there's young gentlemen enow can help you to the rest. Now it requires our wits carry thyself but heedfully now, and we are both——

¹ See note 2 p. 277

*Re-enter Host**Host* Master Witgood, your uncle*Wit* Cuds me¹ remove thyself awhile, I'll serve for him
[*Exeunt Courtesan and Host* 260]*Enter LUCRE.**Luc* Nephew, good morrow, nephew*Wit* The same to you, kind uncle*Luc* How fares the widow? does the meeting hold?*Wit* O, no question of that, sir*Luc* I'll strike the stroke, then, for thee, no more days¹*Wit* The sooner the better, uncle O, she's mightily followed!*Luc* And yet so little rumoured!*Wit* Mightily here comes one old gentleman, and he'll make her a jointure of three hundred a year, forsooth, another wealthy suitor will estate his son in his lifetime, and make him weigh down the widow, here a merchant's son will possess her with no less than three goodly lordships at once, which were all pawns to his father
275*Luc* Peace, nephew, let me hear no more of 'em, it mads me Thou shalt prevent² 'em all No words to the widow of my coming hither Let me see—

¹ The editor of 1816 reads "delays," but the correction is not needed. Lucre is employing usurers' language. A borrower who found himself at the stipulated time unable to pay his debts would crave for "further day" (or "longer day"), i.e. a postponement of the settlement.

² Anticipate

'tis now upon nine before twelve, nephew, we will have
the bargain struck, we will, faith, boy 280

Wil. O, my precious uncle ! [Exeunt

SCENE II

A Room in HOARD'S House

Enter HOARD and JOYCE.

Hoa Niece, sweet niece, prithee, have a care to my
house, I leave all to thy discretion Be content to
dream awhile, I'll have a husband for thee shortly put
that care upon me, wench, for in choosing wives and
husbands I am only fortunate, I have that gift given
me [Exit

Joy But 'tis not likely you should choose for me,
Since nephew to your chiefest enemy
Is he whom I affect but, O, forgetful !
Why dost thou flatter thy affections so, 10
With name of him that for a widow's bed
Neglects thy purer love ? Can it be so,
Or does report dissemble ?

Enter GEORGE

How now, sir ?

Geo A letter, with which came a private charge

Joy Therein I thank your care [Exit GEORGE

—I know this hand—

[Reads] *Dearer than sight, what the world reports of me,
yet believe not, rumour will alter shortly be thou constant,*

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Dra. That's an English drab, sir give your worship
good morrow [Exit.

Hoa. A merry knave, i'faith! I shall remember a
Dutch widow the longest day of my life. 20

First G. Did not I use most art to win the widow?

Sec G. You shall pardon me for that, sir, master
Hoard knows I took her at best 'vantage

Hoa. What's that, sweet gentlemen, what's that?

Sec G. He will needs bear me down, that his art only
wrought with the widow most

Hoa. O, you did both well, gentlemen, you did both
well, I thank you

First G. I was the first that moved her

Hoa. You were, i'faith

Sec G. But it was I that took her at the bound 30

Hoa. Ay, that was you faith, gentlemen, 'tis right

Third G. I boasted least, but 'twas I join'd their
hands

Hoa. By th' mass, I think he did you did all well,
Gentlemen, you did all well, contend no more

First G. Come, yon room's fittest

Hoa. True, 'tis next the door [Exit

Enter WITGOOD, Courtesan, Host, and Drawer

Dra. You're very welcome please you to walk up
stairs, cloth's laid, sir

Court. Up stairs? troth, I am very¹ weary, master
Witgood

¹ So ed 2 —Not in ed 1

Wit Rest yourself here awhile, widow ; we'll have a cup of muscadine in this little room 41

Dra. A cup of muscadine ? You shall have the best, sir

Wit But, do you hear, sirrah ?

Dra Do you call ? anon, sir

Wit What is there provided for dinner ?

Dra I cannot readily tell you, sir if you please you may go into the kitchen and see yourself, sir, many gentlemen of worship do use to do it, I assure you, sir

[*Exit*

Host A pretty familiar, prigg¹ rascal, he has his part without book 51

Wit Against you are ready to drink to me, widow, I'll be present to pledge you

Court Nay, I commend your care, 'tis done well of you [*Exit WITGOOD*]—'Las,² what have I forgot !

Host What, mistress ?

Court I slipt my wedding-ring off when I washed, and left it at my lodging prithe, run, I shall be sad without it [*Exit Host*]—So, he's gone Boy

Enter Boy.

Boy Anon, forsooth 60

Court Come hither, sirrah learn secretly if one master Hoard, an ancient gentleman, be about house

Boy I heard such a one named

Court Commend me to him

¹ "*Prigging* is used in this passage merely as a jocular term of reproach"—*Dyce*

² Old eds "*asse* "

Re-enter HOARD and Gentlemen

Hoa Ay, boy,¹ do thy commendations

Court O, you come well away, to boat, begone

Hoa Thus wise men are reveng'd, give two for one

[*Exeunt*

Re-enter WITGOOD and Vintner

Wit I must request

You, sir, to show extraordinary care

My uncle comes with gentlemen, his friends, 70

And 'tis upon a making²

Vin Is it so?

I'll give a special charge, good master Witgood

May I be bold to see her?

Wit Who? [t]he widow?

With all my heart, i'faith, I'll bring you to her

Vin If she be a Staffordshire gentlewoman, 'tis much
if I know her not.

Wit How now? boy! drawer!

Vin Hie!

Re-enter Boy

Boy Do you call, sir?

Wit Went the gentlewoman up that was here? 80

Boy Up, sir? she went out, sir

Wit Out, sir?

Boy Out, sir one master Hoard, with a guard of

¹ Old eds. "I bee"

² "i.e. matching" in our early writers *make* is often used for *mate* —*Dyce*

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gentlemen, carried her out at back door, a pretty while since, sir

Wit Hoard? death and darkness! Hoard?

Re-enter Host

Host The devil of ring I can find

Wit How now? what news? where's the widow?

Host My mistress? is she not here, sir?

Wit More madness yet! 90

Host She sent me for a ring

Wit A plot, a plot!—To boat! she's stole away.

Host What?

Enter LUCRE and Gentlemen

Wit Follow! inquire old Hoard, my uncle's adversary.

[*Exit Host*

Luc Nephew, what's that?

Wit Thrice-miserable wretch!

Luc Why, what's the matter?

Vin The widow's borne away, sir

Luc Ha? passion of me!—A heavy welcome, gentlemen

First G The widow gone?

Luc Who durst attempt it?

Wit Who but old Hoard, my uncle's adversary? 100

Luc How?

Wit With his confederates

Luc Hoard, my deadly enemy?—Gentlemen, stand to me,

I will not bear it, 'tis in hate of me,

That villain seeks my shame, nay, thirsts my blood ,
 He owes me mortal malice.
 I'll spend my wealth on this spiteful plot,
 Ere he shall cross me and my nephew thus
Wit So maliciously !

Re-enter Host

Luc How now, you treacherous rascal ? 110
Host That's none of my name, sir
Wit Poor soul, he knew not on't !
Luc I'm sorry I see then 'twas a mere plot
Host I trac'd 'em nearly——
*Luc*¹ Well ?
Host And hear for certain
 They have took Cole-Harbour²
Luc The devil's sanctuary !
 They shall not rest , I'll pluck her from his arms —
 Kind and dear gentlemen,
 If ever I had seat within your breasts——
First G No more, good sir , it is a wrong to us
 To see you injur'd in a cause so just 120
 We'll spend our lives but we will right our friends
Luc Honest and kind ! come, we've delayed too long
 Nephew, take comfort , a just cause is strong
Wit. That's all my comfort, uncle [*Excunt all but*
WITGOOD] Ha, ha, ha !
 Now may events fall luckily and well
 He that ne'er strives, says wit, shall ne'er excel [*Exit*

¹ So ed 1.—Ed 2 "*Wit*"
 VOL. II

² See note 2, p 277
 U

SCENE IV

*A Room in DAMPIT'S House**Enter DAMPIT, drunk*

Dam When did I say my prayers? In anno 88, when the great armada was coming, and in anno 89,¹ when the great thundering and lightning was, I prayed heartily then, i'faith, to overthrow Poovies' new buildings, I kneeled by my great iron chest, I remember

Enter AUDREY

Aud Master Dampit, one may hear you before they see you you keep sweet hours, master Dampit, we were all a-bed three hours ago

Dam Audrey?*Aud* O, you're a fine gentleman! 10

Dam So I am, i'faith, and a fine scholar do you use to go to bed so early, Audrey?

Aud Call you this early, master Dampit?

Dam Why, is't not one of clock i' th' morning? is not that early enough? fetch me a glass of fresh beer

Aud Here, I have warmed your nightcap for you, master Dampit

¹ "Both the quartos read '99,' but Stow does not mention any *very* great storm in that year, although he has noticed one or two, whereas in the year 1589, he observes, that on 'the 1st August, at night, was the greatest lightning and thunder that had, at any time, bin seene or heard about London in the memory of any man living, and yet, thanks be given to God, little hurt heard of'"—*Editor of 1816.*

Dam. Draw it on then I am very weak truly I have not eaten so much as the bulk of an egg these three days 20

Aud. You have drunk the more, master Dampit.

Dam. What's that?

Aud. You mought, and¹ you would, master Dampit.

Dam. I answer you, I cannot hold your prating, you prate too much, and understand too little are you answered? Give me a glass of beer

Aud. May I ask you how you do, master Dampit?

Dam. How do I? I'faith, naught

Aud. I ne'er knew you do otherwise

Dam. I eat not one pen'north of bread these two years Give me a glass of fresh beer I am not sick, nor I am not well 32

Aud. Take this warm napkin about your neck, sir, whilst I help to make you unready²

Dam. How now, Audrey - prater, with your scurvy devices, what say you now?

Aud. What say I, master Dampit? I say nothing, but that you are very weak

Dam. Faith, thou hast more cony-catching³ devices than all London 40

Aud. Why, master Dampit, I never deceived you in all my life

Dam. Why was that? because I never did trust thee

Aud. I care not what you say, master Dampit.

¹ "Mought, and" = might, if

² Sharping

³ Undress you.

Dam. Hold thy prating I answer thee, thou art a beggar, a quean, and a bawd are you answered?

Aud Fie, master Dampit ¹ a gentleman, and have such words?

Dam Why, thou base drudge of infortunity, thou kitchen-stuff-drab of beggary, roguery, and cockscombry, thou cavernesed quean of foolery, knavery, and bawd-reaminy, I'll tell thee what, I will not give a louse for thy fortunes 53

Aud No, master Dampit? and there's a gentleman comes a-wooing to me, and he doubts ¹ nothing but that you will get me from him

Dam I? If I would either have thee or lie with thee for two thousand pound, would I might be damned! why, thou base, impudent quean of foolery, flattery, and coxcombry, are you answered? 60

Aud Come, will you rise and go to bed, sir?

Dam Rise, and go to bed too, Audrey? How does mistress Proserpine?

Aud Foooh!

Dam She's as fine a philosopher of a stinkard's wife, as any within the liberties Faugh, faugh, Audrey!

Aud How now, master Dampit?

Dam Fie upon't, what a choice of stinks here is! what hast thou done, Audrey? fie upon't, here's a choice of stinks indeed! Give me a glass of fresh beer, and then I will to bed 71

Aud It waits for you above, sir

¹ Fears

Dam. Foh ! I think they burn horns in Barnard's Inn
If ever I smelt such an abominable stink, usury forsake
me. [Exit

Aud They be the stinking nails of his trampling feet,
and he talks of burning of horns [Exit

ACT IV

SCENE I

*An Apartment at Cole Harbour*¹

Enter HOARD, Courtesan, LAMPREY, SPICHCOCK, *and*
Gentlemen

First G Join hearts, join hands,
In wedlock's bands,
Never to part
Till death cleave your heart
[*To* HOARD] You shall forsake all other women,
[*To* Courtesan] You lords, knights, gentlemen, and
yeomen
What my tongue slips
Make up with your lips
Hoa [*kisses her*] Give you joy, mistress Hoard, let
the kiss come about [*Knocking*
Who knocks? Convey my little pig-eater² out 10
Luc [*within*] Hoard¹
Hoa Upon my life, my adversary, gentlemen¹

¹ See note 2, p 277

² "An odd term of endearment *pigsnie* is common enough"—*Dyce*.

Luc. [*within.*] Hoard, open the door, or we will force it ope

Give us the widow.

Hoa Gentlemen, keep 'em out.

Lam. He comes upon his death that enters here.

Luc. [*within*] My friends, assist me !

Hoa He has assistants, gentlemen

Lam Tut, nor him nor them we in this action fear

Luc [*within*] Shall I, in peace, speak one word with the widow ?

Court Husband, and gentlemen, hear me but a word

Lam Freely, sweet wife

Court Let him in peaceably , 20

You know we're sure from any act of his

Hoa Most true

*Court.*¹ You may stand by and smile at his old weakness

Let me alone to answer him

Hoa Content ,

Twill be good mirth, i'faith How think you, gentlemen ?

Lam Good gullery !

Hoa Upon calm conditions let him in

Luc [*within*] All spite and malice !

Lam Hear me, master Lucre

So you will vow a peaceful entrance

With those your friends, and only exercise 30

Calm conference with the widow, without fury,

The passage shall receive you

¹ Old ed " *Luc* "

Luc [*within.*] I do vow it

Lam Then enter and talk freely here she stands.

Enter LUCRE, Gentlemen, and Host

Luc O, master Hoard, your spite has watch'd the hour !

You're excellent at vengeance, master Hoard

Hoar Ha, ha, ha !

Luc I am the fool you laugh at

You are wise, sir, and know the seasons well —

Come hither, widow why is it thus ?

O, you have done me infinite disgrace,

40

And your own credit no small injury !

Suffer mine enemy so despitely

To bear you from my nephew ? O, I had

Rather half my substance had been forfeit

And begg'd by some starv'd rascal !

Court Why, what would you wish me do, sir ?

I must not overthrow my state for love

We have too many precedents for that ,

From thousands of our wealthy undone widows

One may derive some wit I do confess

50

I lov'd your nephew, nay, I did affect him

Against the mind and liking of my friends ,¹

Believ'd his promises , lay here in hope

Of flatter'd living, and the boast of lands

Coming to touch his wealth and state, indeed,

It appears dross , I find him not the man ,

¹ So ed 2.—Ed 1 " friend "

Imperfect, mean, scarce furnish'd of his needs
In words, fair lordships, in performance, hovels
Can any woman love the thing that is not?

Luc Broke you for this?

Court Was it not cause too much? 60

Send to inquire his state most part of it
Lay two years mortgag'd in his uncle's hands

Luc Why, say it did, you might have known my
mind

I could have soon restor'd it

Court Ay, had I but seen any such thing perform'd,
Why, 'twould have tied my affection, and contain'd
Me in my first desires do you think, i'faith,
That I could twine such a dry oak as this,
Had promise in your nephew took effect?

Luc. Why, and there's no time past, and rather
than 70

My adversary should thus thwart my hopes,
I would——

Court Tut, you've been ever full of golden speech
If words were lands, your nephew would be rich

Luc Widow, believe't, I vow by my best bliss,
Before these gentlemen, I will give in
The mortgage to my nephew instantly,
Before I sleep or eat

First G [*friend to LUCRE*] We'll pawn our credits,
Widow, what he speaks shall be perform'd
In fulness

Luc Nay, more, I will estate him 80
In farther blessings, he shall be my heir,

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I have no son ,
I'll bind myself to that condition

Court. When I shall hear this done, I shall soon yield
To reasonable terms

Luc In the mean season,
Will you protest, before these gentlemen,
To keep yourself as you're now at this present ?

Court I do protest, before these gentlemen,
I will be as clear then as I am now

Luc I do believe you Here's your own honest
servant, 90

I'll take him along with me

Court Ay, with all my heart

Luc He shall see all perform'd, and bring you word

Court That's all I wait for

*Ho*a What, have you finished, master Lucre ? ha, ha,
ha, ha !

Luc So laugh, Hoard, laugh at your poor enemy, do ,
The wind may turn, you may be laugh'd at too ,
Yes, marry may you, sir — Ha, ha, ha !

[*Exeunt* LUCRE, Gentlemen, and Host

*Ho*a Ha, ha, ha ! if every man that swells in malice
Could be reveng'd as happily as I, 100
He would choose hate, and forswear amity —
What did he say, wife, prithee ?

Court Faith, spoke to ease his mind

*Ho*a O, O, O !

Court You know now little to any purpose

*Ho*a True, true, true !

Court He would do mountains now

Hoa. Ay, ay, ay, ay.

Lam. You've struck him dead, master Hoard

Spi. And¹ his nephew desperate

Hoa. I know't, sirs, I

Never did man so crush his enemy [Exeunt 111

SCENE II

A Room in LUCRE'S House

Enter LUCRE, Gentlemen, and Host, meeting FREEDOM.

Luc My son-in-law, Sam Freedom, where's my nephew?

Free O man in lamentation,² father

Luc How!

Free He thumps his breast like a gallant dicer that has lost his doublet, and stands in's shirt to do penance

Luc Alas, poor gentleman!

Free I warrant you may hear him sigh in a still evening to your house at Highgate

Luc I prithee, send him in

Free Were it to do a greater matter, I will not stick with you, sir, in regard you married my mother [Exit 11

Luc Sweet gentlemen, cheer him up, I will but fetch the mortgage and return to you instantly

¹ So ed. 2 — Ed. 1 'I [ay] and "

² "O man in desperation" is an old tune mentioned in Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (Hazlitt's Dodsley, viii 51) and Peele's *The Old Wives' Tale*. See also Ebsworth's *Roxburghe Ballads*, iv 365, 468

Luc. Ay, that's it mads me, spites me! I'll spend my wealth ere he shall carry her so, because I know 'tis only to spite me. Ay, this is it. Here, nephew [*giving a paper*], before these kind gentlemen, I deliver in your mortgage, my promise to the widow, see, 'tis done. be wise, you're once more master of your own. The widow shall perceive now you are not altogether such a beggar as the world reputes you, you can make shift to bring her to three hundred a-year, sir

43

First G. Byrlady,¹ and that's no toy, sir

Luc. A word, nephew

First G. [*to Host.*] Now you may certify the widow

Luc. You must conceive it aright, nephew, now,
To do you good I am content to do this

Wit. I know it, sir

Luc. But your own conscience can tell I had it
Dearly enough of you

50

Wit. Ay, that's most certain

Luc. Much money laid out, beside many a journey
To fetch the rent, I hope you'll think on't, nephew

Wit. I were worse than a beast else, I faith

Luc. Although to blind the widow and the world,
I out of policy do't, yet there's a conscience, nephew

Wit. Heaven forbid else!

Luc. When you are full possess'd,
'Tis nothing to return it

Wit. Alas, a thing quickly done, uncle!

Luc. Well said! you know I give it you but in trust

60

¹ By our Ladv

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Wit Pray, let me understand you rightly, uncle .
You give it me but in trust ?

Luc No.

Wit That is, you trust me with it ?

Luc True, true

Wit But if ever I trust you with it again,
Would I might be truss'd up¹ for my labour ! [Aside

Luc You can all witness, gentlemen , and you, sir
yeoman ? 69

Host My life for yours, sir, now, I know my mistress's
mind so² well toward your nephew, let things be in pre-
paration, and I'll train her hither in most excellent fashion.

[Exit

Luc A good old boy !—Wife ! Jenny !

Enter MISTRESS LUCRE.

Mis L What's the news, sir ?

Luc The wedding-day's at hand prithee, sweet wife,
express thy housewifery , thou'rt a fine cook, I know't ,
thy first husband married thee out of an alderman's
kitchen , go to, he raised thee for raising of paste
What¹ here's none but friends , most of our beginnings
must be winked at —Gentlemen, I invite you all to my
nephew's wedding against Thursday morning 81

First G With all our hearts, and we shall joy to see
Your enemy so mock'd

¹ " Brome has the same poor play on words

' When Lodovico

Does not prove *trustie*, then let me be *truss'd* '

The Queen and Concubine, p 106 —*Five New Playes*, 1659 "—*Dyce*

² Ed 1 "to"—Ed 2 "too"

SCENE III.] *A Trick to Catch the Old One.* 319

Luc. He laugh'd at me, gentlemen, ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt all but Witgood*

Wit He has no conscience, faith, would laugh at them
They laugh at one another,
Who then can be so cruel? troth, not I,
I rather pity now, than ought envy?¹
I do conceive such joy in mine own happiness,
I have no leisure yet to laugh at their follies 90
Thou soul of my estate, I kiss thee! [*To the mortgage.*
I miss life's comfort when I miss thee,
O, never will we part agen,
Until I leave the sight of men!
We'll ne'er trust conscience of our kin,
Since cozenage brings that title in [*Exit*

SCENE III.

A Street

Enter three Creditors

First C I'll wait these seven hours but I'll see him
caught

Sec C Faith, so will I

Thrid C Hang him, prodigal! he's stript of the widow

First C A' my troth, she's the wiser, she has made
the happier choice and I wonder of what stuff those
widows' hearts are made of, that will marry unfledged
boys before comely thrum-chinned² gentlemen

¹ Bear malice

² Rough-chinned See note 4. vol. 1 p. 232

*Enter Boy**Boy* News, news, news¹*First C.* What, boy?*Boy* The rioter is caught. 10*First C* So, so, so, so¹ it warms me at the heart,
I love a' life to see dogs upon men.

O, here he comes

*Enter Sergeants, with WITGOOD in custody**Wit* My last joy was so great, it took away the sense
of all future afflictions What a day is here o'ercast!
how soon a black tempest rises!*First C.* O, we may speak with you now, sir!¹ what's
become of your rich widow? I think you may cast
your cap at the widow, may you not, sir?*Sec C* He a rich widow? who, a prodigal, a daily
rioter, and a nightly vomiter? he a widow of account?
he a hole¹ i' th' counter 22*Wit* You do well, my masters, to tyrannise over
misery, to afflict the afflicted 'tis a custom you have
here amongst you, I would wish you never leave it, and
I hope you'll do as I bid you*First C* Come, come, sir, what say you extempore
now to your bill of a hundred pound? a sweet debt for
froating² your doublets*Sec C* Here's mine of forty 30*Thrid C* Here's mine of fifty¹ See note 3, vol. 1 p. 192² Perhaps the meaning is *fretting, embroidering* Usually *frote* =
rub — "I think *froating* means here nothing more than dressing up,
repairing" — *Dyce*

Wit Pray, sirs,—you'll give me breath ?

First C No, sir, we'll keep you out of breath still ,
then we shall be sure you will not run away from us.

Wit Will you but hear me speak ?

Sec C You shall pardon us for that, sir , we know
you have too fair a tongue of your own , you overcame
us too lately, a shame take you ' we are like to lose all
that for want of witnesses . we dealt in policy then ,
always when we strive to be most politic we prove most
coxcombs *non plus ultra* I perceive by us, we're not
ordained to thrive by wisdom. and therefore we must be
content to be tradesmen

43

Wit Give me but reasonable time, and I protest I'll
make you ample satisfaction

First C Do you talk of reasonable time to us ?

Wit 'Tis true, beasts know no reasonable time

Sec C We must have either money or carcass

Wit Alas, what good will my carcass do you ?

Thurd C. O, 'tis a secret delight we have amongst us '
we that are used to keep birds in cages, have the heart
to keep men in prison, I warrant you

52

Wit I perceive I must crave a little more aid from my
wits . do but make shift for me this once, and I'll for-
swear ever to trouble you in the like fashion hereafter .
I'll have better employment for you, and I live [*Aside*]
—You'll give me leave, my masters, to make trial of my
friends, and raise all means I can ?

First C That's our desire, sir

Enter Host

Host Master Witgood

60

Wit O, art thou come?

Host May I speak one word with you in private, sir?

Wit No, by my faith, canst thou, I am in hell here, and the devils will not let me come to thee.

First C Do you call us devils? you shall find us puritans — Bear him away, let 'em talk as they go. we'll not stand to hear 'em — Ah, sir, am I a devil? I shall think the better of myself as long as I live a devil, i'faith? [Exit.

SCENE IV

A room in HOARD'S House

Enter HOARD

Hoa What a sweet blessing hast thou, master Hoard, above a multitude! wilt thou never be thankful? how dost thou think to be blest another time? or dost thou count this the full measure of thy happiness? by my troth, I think thou dost not only a wife large in possessions, but spacious in content; she's rich, she's young, she's fair, she's wise when I wake, I think of her lands—that revives me, when I go to bed, I dream of her beauty—and that's enough for me she's worth four hundred a-year in her very smock, if a man knew how to use it. But the journey will be ail, in troth, into the country, to ride to her lands in state and order following¹, my brother, and other worshipful gentlemen, whose companies I ha' sent down for already, to ride along with us in their goodly

¹ Compare Quomodo's soliloquy in *Michaelmas Term*, vol. i. p. 299

decorum beards, their broad velvet cassocks, and chains of gold twice or thrice double, against which time I'll entertain some ten men of mine own into liveries, all of occupations or qualities, I will not keep an idle man about me the sight of which will so vex my adversary Lucre—for we'll pass by his door of purpose, make a little stand for [the] nonce, and have our horses curvet before the window—certainly he will never endure it, but run up and hang himself presently 23

Enter Servant.

How now, sirrah, what news? any that offer their service to me yet?

Ser Yes, sir, there are some i' th' hall that wait for your worship's liking, and desire to be entertained

Hoa Are they of occupation?

Ser They are men fit for your worship, sir

Hoa Sayest so? send 'em all in [*Exit Servant*]—
To see ten men ride after me in watchet liveries, with orange-tawny capes,¹—'twill cut his comb, i'faith 32

Enter Tailor, Barber, Perfumer, Falconer, and Huntsman.

How now? of what occupation are you, sir?

Tai A tailor, an't please your worship

Hoa A tailor? O, very good you shall serve to make all the liveries—What are you, sir?

Bar A barber, sir

Hoa A barber? very needful you shall shave all the

¹ The editor of 1816 reads "capes."

house, and, if need require, stand for a reaper i' th' summer time — You, sir? 40

Per A perfumer

Hoa I smelt you before . perfumers, of all men, had need carry themselves uprightly , for if they were once knaves, they would be smelt out quickly — To you, sir?

Fal A falconer, an't please your worship

Hoa Sa ho, sa ho, sa ho ! — And you, sir?

Hunt A huntsman, sir

Hoa There, boy, there, boy, there, boy ! I am not so old but I have pleasant days to come I promise, you, my masters, I take such a good liking to you, that I entertain you all , I put you already into my countenance, and you shall be shortly in my livery , but especially you two, my jolly falconer and my bonny huntsman ; we shall have most need of you at my wife's manor-houses i' th' country , there's goodly parks and champion ¹ grounds for you , we shall have all our sports within ourselves ; all the gentlemen a' th' country shall be beholding to us and our pastimes 58

Fal And we'll make your worship admire, sir

Hoa Sayest thou so? do but make me admire, and thou shall want for nothing — My tailor

Tai Anon, sir

Hoa Go presently in hand with the liveries

Tai I will, sir

Hoa My barber

Bar Here, sir

¹ The old form of *champaign*

Hoa. Make 'em all trim fellows, louse 'em well,—especially my huntsman,—and cut all their beards of the Polonian fashion —My perfumer

Per. Under your nose, sir 70

Hoa Cast a better savour upon the knaves, to take away the scent of my tailor's feet, and my barber's lotium-water

Per It shall be carefully performed, sir

Hoa But you, my falconer and huntsman, the welcomest men alive, i'faith!

Hunt And we'll show you that, sir, shall deserve your worship's favour

Hoa I prithee, show me that —Go, you knaves all, and wash your lungs i' th' buttery, go [*Exeunt* Tailor, Barber, &c.] —By th' mass, and well remembered! I'll ask my wife that question —Wife, mistress Jane Hoard!

Enter Courtesan, altered in apparel

Court Sir, would you with me? 82

Hoa I would but know, sweet wile, which might stand best to thy liking, to have the wedding dinner kept here or i' th' country?

Court Hum —faith, sir, 'twould like me better here, here you were married, here let all rites be ended

Hoa. Could a marquesse¹ give a better answer? Hoard, bear thy head aloft, thou'st a wife will advance it,

Enter Host with a letter

What haste comes here now? yea, a letter? some dreg of my adversary's malice Come hither, what's the news?

¹ Marchioness

Host A thing that concerns my mistress, sir. 92

[*Giving a letter to Courtesan.*

Hoa Why then it concerns me, knave

Host Ay, and you, knave, too (cry your worship mercy)· you are both like to come into trouble, I promise you, sir, a pre-contract ¹

Hoa How? a pre-contract, sayest thou?

Host I fear they have too much proof on't, sir old Lucre, he runs mad up and down, and will to law as fast as he can, young Witgood laid hold on by his creditors, he exclaims upon you a' t'other side, says you have wrought his undoing by the injurious detaining of his contract 103

Hoa Body a' me!

Host He will have utmost satisfaction,
The law shall give him recompense, he says

Court Alas, his creditors so merciless! my state being yet uncertain, I deem it not unconscionable to further him [Aside

Host True, sir 110

Hoa Wife, what says that letter? let me construe it

Court Curs'd be my rash and unadvised words!

[*Tears the letter and stamps on it*

I'll set my foot upon my tongue,
And tread my inconsiderate grant to dust

Hoa Wife——

Host A pretty shift, i'faith! I commend a woman

¹ A pre-contract of marriage could not be set aside without the mutual consent of the parties. If the Courtesan had been pre-contracted to Witgood, her marriage with Hoard would be invalid. See the subject discussed in Swinburne's *Treatise of Spousals*, 1686

when she can make away a letter from her husband handsomely, and this was cleanly done, by my troth

[*Aside*

Court. I did, sir,
Some foolish words I must confess did pass, 120
Which now litigiously he fastens on me.

Hoa Of what force? let me examine 'em

Court Too strong, I fear would I were well freed of him!

Hoa Shall I compound?

Court No, sir, I'd have it done some nobler way
Of your side, I'd have you come off with honour,
Let baseness keep with them Why, have you not
The means, sir? the occasion's offer'd you

Hoa. Where? how, dear wife? 129

Court He is now caught by his creditors, the slave's
needy, his debts petty, he'll rather bind himself to all
inconveniences than rot in prison by this only means
you may get a release from him 'tis not yet come to
his uncle's hearing, send speedily for the creditors, by
this time he's desperate, he'll set his hand to anything
take order for his debts, or discharge 'em quite a pax
on him, let's be rid of a rascal!

Hoa. Excellent!

Thou dost astonish me — Go, run, make haste,
Bring both the creditors and Witgood hither 140

Host This will be some revenge yet.

[*Aside, and exit*

Hoa In the mean space I'll have a release drawn —
Within there!

Enter Servant.

Ser Sir?

Hoa Sirrah, come take directions, go to my scrivener.

Court [*aside, while HOARD gives directions to the*
Servant] I'm yet like those whose riches lie in dreams,
 If I be wak'd, they're false, such is my fate,
 Who venture¹ deeper than the desperate state
 Though I have sinn'd, yet could I become new,
 For where I once vow, I am ever true 150

Hoa Away, despatch, on my displeasure quickly
[*Exit Servant*]

Happy occasion! pray heaven he be in the right vein
 now to set his hand to't, that nothing alter him, grant
 that all his follies may meet in him at once, to besot him
 enough!

I pray for him, i'faith, and here he comes

Enter WIRGOOD and Creditors

Wit What would you with me now, my uncle's spite-
 ful adversary?

Hoa Nay, I am friends

Wit Ay, when your mischief's spent

Hoa I heard you were arrested

Wit Well, what then? 160

You will pay none of my debts, I am sure

Hoa A wise man cannot tell,
 There may be those conditions 'greed upon
 May move me to do much

Wit Ay, when?—

'Tis thou, perjurèd woman! (O, no name

¹ Old eds "ventures"

Is vild enough to match thy treachery !)
That art the cause of my confusion

Court. Out, you penurious slave !

Hoa Nay, wife, you are too froward , 170
Let him alone , give losers leave to talk

Wit Shall I remember thee of another promise
Far stronger than the first ?

Court I'd fain know that

Wit 'Twould call shame to thy cheeks

Court Shame !

Wit Hark in your ear —
Will he come off, think'st thou, and pay my debts
roundly ?

Court Doubt nothing , there's a release a-
drawing and all, to which you must set your hand

Wit Excellent !

Court But methinks, i'faith, you might have
made some shift to discharge this yourself, having
in the mortgage, and never have burdened my
conscience with it

Wit A' my troth, I could not, for my creditors'
cruelties extend to the present

Court. No more —

Why, do your worst for that, I defy you

Wit You're impudent I'll call up witnesses 190

Court Call up thy wits, for thou hast been devoted
To follies a long time

Hoa Wife, you're too bitter —
Master Witgood, and you, my masters, you shall hear a
mild speech come from me now, and this it is 't has

They converse apart

been my fortune, gentlemen, to have an extraordinary blessing poured upon me a' late, and here she stands ; I have wedded her, and bedded her, and yet she is little the worse some foolish words she hath passed to you in the country, and some peevish¹ debts you owe here in the city, set the hare's head to the goose-giblet,² release you her of her words, and I'll release you of your debts, sir.

Wit Would you so? I thank you for that, sir, I cannot blame you, i' faith 203

Hoa. Why, are not debts better than words, sir?

Wit Are not words promises, and are not promises debts, sir?

Hoa He plays at back-racket with me [*Aside*

First C Come hither, master Witgood, come hither, be ruled by fools once

Sec C We are citizens, and know what belong[s] to't.

First C Take hold of his offer pax on her, let her go, if your debts were once discharged, I would help you to a widow myself worth ten of her 213

Third C Mass, partner, and now you remember me on't, there's master Mulligrub's sister newly fallen a widow

First C Cuds me, as pat as can be¹ there's a widow left for you, ten thousand in money, beside plate, jewels, *et cetera* I warrant it a match, we can do all in all with her, prithee, despatch, we'll carry thee to her presently

¹ Slight, trivial.

² A proverbial expression Cf Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho*, v 4 — "She has her diamonds, you shall have your money, the child is recovered, the false collier discovered, they came to Braanford to be merry, you were caught in bird-lime, and therefore set the hare's head against the goose-giblets," &c

Wit. My uncle will ne'er endure me when he shall hear I set my hand to a release 222

Sec C Hark, I'll tell thee a trick for that I have spent five hundred pound in suits in my time, I should be wise, thou'rt now a prisoner, make a release, take't of my word, whatsoever a man makes as long as he is in durance, 'tis nothing in law, not thus much

[*Snaps his fingers*]

Wit Say you so, sir?

Thurd C. I have paid for't, I know't

Wit Proceed then, I consent 230

Thurd C Why, well said

Hoa How now, my masters, what have you done with him?

First C With much ado, sir, we have got him to consent

Hoa Ah—a—a! and what come¹ his debts to now?

First C Some eight score odd pounds, sir

Hoa Naw, naw, naw, naw, naw! tell me the second time, give me a lighter sum, they are but desperate debts, you know, ne'er called in but upon such an accident, a poor, needy knave, he would starve and rot in prison come, come, you shall have ten shillings in the pound, and the sum down roundly 244

First C You must make it a mark,² sir

Hoa. Go to then, tell your money in the meantime, you shall find little less there [*Giving them money*]

¹ Old eds. came "

² " Mark " = 13s. 4d

—Come, master Witgood, you are so unwilling to do yourself good now !

Enter Scrivener

Welcome, honest scrivener — Now you shall hear the release read

251

Scri [reads] *Be it known to all men, by these presents, that I, Theodorus Witgood, gentleman, sole nephew to Pecunius Lucre, having unjustly made title and claim to one Jane Medler, late widow of Anthony Medler, and now wife to Walkadine Hoard, in consideration of a competent sum of money to discharge my debts, do for ever hereafter disclaim any title, right, estate, or interest in or to the said widow, late in the occupation of the said Anthony Medler, and now in the occupation of Walkadine Hoard, as also neither to lay claim by virtue of any former contract, grant, promise, or demise, to any of her manor[s], manor-houses, parks, groves, meadow-grounds, arable lands, barns, stacks, stables, dove-holes, and coney-burrows, together with all her cattle, money, plate, jewels, borders, chains, bracelets, furnitures, hangings, moveables or immoveables¹ In witness whereof, I the said Theodorus Witgood have interchangeably set to my hand and seal before these presents, the day and date above written*

269

Wit What a precious fortune hast thou slipt here, like a beast as thou art !

Hoa Come, unwilling heart, come

Wit Well, master Hoard, give me the pen, I see 'Tis vain to quarrel with our destiny [*Signs the paper*

¹ So ed 2 — Ed 1 "immoveables"

Hoa O, as vain a thing as can be¹ you cannot commit a greater absurdity, sir. So, so, give me that hand now, before all these presents, I am friends for ever with thee 278

Wit. Troth, and it were pity of my heart now, if I should bear you any grudge, i'faith

Hoa. Content I'll send for thy uncle against the wedding dinner, we will be friends once again

Wit I hope to bring it to pass myself, sir

Hoa How now? is't right, my masters?

First C 'Tis something wanting, sir, yet it shall be sufficient

Hoa Why, well said, a good conscience makes a fine show now-a-days Come, my masters, you shall all taste of my wine ere you depart.

All the Cred We follow you, sir 290

[*Exeunt* HOARD and SCRIVENER

Wit I'll try these fellows now [*Aside*]—A word, sir what, will you carry me to that widow now?

First C Why, do you think we were in earnest, i'faith? carry you to a rich widow? we should get much credit by that a noted rioter¹ a contemptible prodigal¹ 'twas a trick we have amongst us to get in our money fare you well, sir [*Exeunt* Creditors

Wit Farewell, and be hanged, you short pig-haired, ram-headed rascals¹ he that believes in you shall ne'er be saved, I warrant him By this new league I shall have some access¹ unto my love 301

¹ "The quarto of 1616 reads, 'some *above* access,' and the niece

JOYCE *appears above*

Joyce Master Witgood !

Wit. My life !

Joyce Meet me presently , that note directs you [*throws him a letter*] I would not be suspected our happiness attends us farewell.

Wit. A word's enough [*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE V

DAMPIT's *Bed-chamber*

DAMPIT *in bed* , AUDREY *spinning by* , Boy

Aud [*singing*]

*Let the usurer cram him, in interest that excel,
There's pits enow to damn him, before he comes to hell ,
In Holborn some, in Fleet Street some,
Where'er he come there's some, there's some*

Dam *Trahe, trahito*, draw the curtain , give me a sip of sack more

While he drinks, enter LAMPREY and SPICHCOCK

Lam Look you , did not I tell you he lay like the devil in chains, when he was bound for a thousand year ? ¹

[*Joyce*] speaks without a notice of her having entered whereas in the first quarto there is a stage direction, 'She is *above*' and I suppose the word caught the printer's eye and was erroneously introduced into the text."—*Editor of 1816*

¹ "Our poet alludes here to a passage in the Revelation of St. John, chap. xx. 2 —*Editor of 1816*

Spi. But I think the devil had no steel bedstuffs, he goes beyond him for that. 10

Lam Nay, do but mark the conceit of his drinking, one must wipe his mouth for him with a muckinder,¹ do you see, sir?

Spi. Is this the sick trampler? why, he is only bedrid with drinking

Lam True, sir He spies us

Dam. What, Sir Tristram? you come and see a weak man here, a very weak man

Lam If you be weak in body, you should be strong in prayer, sir 20

Dam O, I have prayed too much, poor man!

Lam There's a taste of his soul for you!

Spi Faugh, loathsome!

Lam I come to borrow a hundred pound of you, sir

Dam Alas, you come at an ill time! I cannot spare it, I'faith, I ha' but two thousand i' th' house

Aud Ha, ha, ha!

Dam Out, you gernative² quean, the mullipood³ of villany, the spinner of concupiscency!

Enter SIR LAUNCELOT and others

Sir L Yea, gentlemen, are you here before us? how is he now? 31

¹ Handkerchief — The term is used by Ben Jonson (*Tale of a Tub* iii. 1) and others

² "Gernative" means, I suppose, *grinning* The form *girn* for *grin* is not uncommon

³ Multiple

Lam. Faith, the same man still the tavern bitch has bit him i' th' head ¹

Sir L. We shall have the better sport with him peace — And how cheers master Dampit now?

Dam. O, my bosom, Sir Launcelot, how cheer I ! thy presence is restorative

Sir L. But I hear a great complaint of you, master Dampit, among gallants.

Dam. I am glad of that, i'faith prithee, what? 40

Sir L. They say you are waxed proud a' late, and if a friend visit you in the afternoon, you'll scarce know him

Dam. Fie, fie, proud? I cannot remember any such thing sure I was drunk then.

Sir L. Think you so, sir?

Dam. There 'twas, i'faith, nothing but the pride of the sack, and so certify 'em — Fetch sack, sirrah.

Boy. A vengeance sack you once !

[*Exit, and returns presently with sack*

Aud. Why, master Dampit, if you hold on as you begin, and lie a little longer, you need not take care how to dispose your wealth, you'll make the vintner your heir

Dam. Out, you babliaminy, you unfeathered, crem-toried quean, you culisance of scabiosity ! 53

Aud. Good words, master Dampit, to speak before a maid and a virgin !

Dam. Hang thy virginity upon the pole of carnality !

Aud. Sweet terms ! my mistress shall know 'em

Lam. Note but the misery of this usuring slave here he lies, like a noisome dunghill, full of the poison of his

¹ "One of the many proverbs expressive of inebriety — *Editor of 1816*

drunken blasphemies, and they to whom he bequeaths all, grudge him the very meat that feeds him, the very pillow that eases him. Here may a usurer behold his end: what profits it to be a slave in this world, and a devil i' th' next? 64

Dam. Sir Launcelot, let me buss thee, Sir Launcelot, thou art the only friend that I honour and respect

Sir L. I thank you for that, master Dampit

Dam. Farewell, my bosom Sir Launcelot.

Sir L. Gentlemen, and you love me, let me step behind you, and one of you fall a-talking of me to him 70

Lam. Content.—Master Dampit.—

Dam. So, sir

Lam. Here came Sir Launcelot to see you e'en now

Dam. Hang him, rascal!

Lam. Who? Sir Launcelot?

Dam. Pythagorical rascal!

Lam. Pythagorical?

Dam. Ay, he changes his cloak when he meets a sergeant.

Sir L. What a rogue's this! 80

Lam. I wonder you can rail at him, sir, he comes in love to see you

Dam. A louse for his love! his father was a comb-maker, I have no need of his crawling love: he comes to have longer day,¹ the superlative rascal!

¹ To postpone the payment of money he had borrowed. See note 1, p. 298. Dyce quotes from Brome's *City Wit*, 1. 1. —

* You know this meeting

Was for the creditors to give *longer day*

Cf. Prologue to Marston's *What you Will* —

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Sir L. 'Sfoot, I can no longer endure the rogue!—
Master Dampit, I come to take my leave once again, sir.

Dam. Who? my dear and kind Sir Lancelot, the only
gentleman of England? let me hug thee: farewell, and
a thousand¹ 90

Lam Compos'd of wrongs and slavish flatteries!

Sir L. Nay, gentlemen, he shall show you more tricks
yet, I'll give you another taste of him

Lam Is't possible?

Sir L. His memory is upon departing

Dam Another cup of sack!

Sir L. Mass, then 'twill be quite gone! Before he
drink that, tell him there's a country client come up, and
here attends for his learned advice

Lam Enough 100

Dam One cup more, and then let the bell toll I
hope I shall be weak enough by that time

Lam Master Dampit—

Dam. Is the sack spouting?

Lam 'Tis coming forward, sir Here's a country-
man, a client of yours, waits for your deep and profound
advice, sir

Dam A coxcomby, where is he? let him approach
set me up a peg higher

Lam [to SIR LAUN] You must draw near, sir 110

"A silly subject, too too simply clad
Is all his present, all his ready pay
For many debts Give further day"

¹ "Farewell, and a thousand" = a thousand times farewell The
expression is found in Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* Cf Shakespeare's
"Sweet, and twenty"

Dam. Now, good man fooliaminy, what say you to me now?

Sir L. Please your good worship, I am a poor man, sir——

Dam. What make you in my chamber then?

Sir L. I would entreat your worship's device¹ in a just and honest cause, sir

Dam. I meddle with no such matters, I refer 'em to master No-man's office

Sir L. I had but one house left me in all the world, sir, which was my father's, my grandfather's, my great-grandfather's, and now a villain has unjustly wrung me out, and took possession on't

123

Dam. Has he such feats? Thy best course is to bring thy *ejectione firmæ*, and in seven year thou mayst shove him out by the law

Sir L. Alas, an't please your worship, I have small friends and less money¹

Dam. Hoyday¹ this geer will fadge well² hast no money? why, then, my advice is, thou must set fire a' th' house, and so get him out

131

Lam. That will break strife, indeed.

Sir L. I thank your worship for your hot counsel, sir—Altering but my voice a little, you see he knew me not—you may observe by this, that a drunkard's memory holds longer in the voice than in the person. But, gentlemen, shall I show you a sight? Behold the little

¹ "So a clown in Randolph's *Hey for Honesty*, 1651 'He tell you what I do *devise* you now, this is my pinion act 1 scene 1'—*Dyce*

² This business will succeed well

dive-dapper¹ of damnation, Gulf the usurer, for his time worse than t'other

Lam What's he comes with him? 140

Sir L Why, Hoard, that married lately the widow Medler

Lam. O, I cry you mercy, sir.

Enter HOARD and GULF.

Hoa Now, gentlemen visitants, how does master Dampit?

Sir L Faith, here he lies, e'en drawing in, sir, good canary as fast as he can, sir, a very weak creature truly, he is almost past memory

Hoa Fie, master Dampit! you lie lazing a-bed here, and I come to invite you to my wedding-dinner up, up, up! 151

Dam Who's this? master Hoard? who hast thou married, in the name of foolery?

Hoa A rich widow

Dam A Dutch widow?²

Hoa A rich widow, one widow Medler

Dam Medler? she keeps open house.

Hoa She did, I can tell you, in her t'other husband's days, open house for all comers, horse and man was welcome, and room enough for 'em all 160

Dam There's too much for thee then, thou mayst let out some to thy neighbours

¹ Or *didapper* —the small bird *dabchick*. We have the form *disw dapper* again in *More Dissemblers Besides Women*, III. 1

² See note 3, p. 300

Gulf What, hung alive in chains? O spectacle!
bed-staffs of steel? *O monstrum horrendum, informe, in-*
gens, cui lumen ademptum!¹ O Dampit, Dampit, here's
a just judgment shown upon usury, extortion, and
trampling² villany!

Sir L This [is] excellent, thief rails upon the thief!

Gulf Is this the end of cut-throat usury, brothel, and
blasphemy? now mayst thou see what race a usurer
runs. 171

Dam Why, thou rogue of universality, do not I know
thee? thy sound is like the cuckoo, the Welch ambas-
sador³ thou cowardly slave, that offers to fight with a
sick man when his weapon's down! rail upon me in my
naked⁴ bed? why, thou great Lucifer's little vicar! I
am not so weak but I know a knave at first sight thou
inconscionable rascal! thou that goest upon Middlesex
juries, and wilt make haste to give up thy verdict⁵
because thou wilt not lose thy dinner! Are you
answered? 181

Gulf An't were not for shame——

[*Draws his dagger*]

¹ Virg *Æn* iii 658

² See note 2, p. 264.

³ "A jocular name for the cuckoo, I presume from its migrating
hither from the west — *Nares' Gloss in v*

⁴ *i.e.* undressed in my bed The expression "naked bed" was very
common Cf the much ridiculed line in the *Spanish Tragedy*—

"Who calls Jeronymo from his *naked bed*"

⁵ Did Pope remember this passage?

'The hungry judges soon the sentence sign
And wretches hang, that jurymen may dine'

The Rupe of the Lock, iii 21 — *Dyce*

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Dam Thou wouldst be hanged then.

Lam Nay, you must exercise patience, master Gulf,
always in a sick man's chamber

Sir L He'll quarrel with none, I warrant you, but
those that are bed-rid

Dam Let him come, gentlemen, I am armed. reach
my close-stool hither

Sir L Here will be a sweet fray anon I'll leave you,
gentlemen 191

Lam Nay, we'll along with you — Master Gulf——

Gulf Hang him, usuring rascal ¹

Sir L Push ¹ set your strength to his, your wit to his ¹

Aud Pray, gentlemen, depart, his hour's come upon
him — Sleep in my bosom, sleep

Sir L Nay, we have enough of him, i'faith, keep him
for the house

Now make your best

For thrice his wealth I would not have his breast 200

Gulf A little thing would make me beat him now
he's asleep

Sir L Mass, then 'twill be a pitiful day when he
wakes I would be loath to see that day come

Gulf You overrule me, gentlemen, i'faith

[*Exeunt*

¹ Push

ACT V

SCENE I

A Room in LUCRE'S House

Enter LUCRE and WITGOOD

Wit Nay, uncle, let me prevail with you so much ,
I'faith, go, now he has invited you.

Luc I shall have great joy there when he has borne
away the widow !

Wit Why, la, I thought where I should find you
presently uncle, a' my troth, 'tis nothing so

Luc What's nothing so, sir ? is not he married to the
widow ?

Wit No, by my troth, is he not, uncle

Luc How ?

10

Wit Will you have the truth on't ? he is married to a
whore, i'faith

Luc I should laugh at that.

Wit Uncle, let me perish in your favour if you find
it not so, and that 'tis I that have married the honest
woman

Luc Ha ! I'd walk ten mile a' foot to see that, i'faith

Wit And see't you shall, or I'll ne'er see you again

Luc A quean, i'faith ? ha, ha, ha ! *[Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Room in HOARD'S House

Enter HOARD tasting wine, Host following in a livery cloak

Hoa Pup, pup, pup, pup, I like not this wine is there never a better tierce in the house?

Host Yes, sir, there are as good tierce in the house as any are in England

Hoa Desire your mistress, you knave, to taste 'em all over, she has better skill

Host Has she so? the better for her, and the worse for you. [*Aside, and exit*

Hoa Arthur!

Enter ARTHUR

Is the cupboard¹ of plate set out? 10

Arth All's in order, sir [*Exit*

Hoa I am in love with my liveries every time I think on 'em, they make a gallant show, by my troth Niece!

Enter JOYCE

Joyce Do you call, sir?

Hoa Prithce, show a little diligence, and overlook the knaves a little, they'll filch and steal to-day, and send whole pasties home to their wives and² thou be'st a good niece, do not see me purloined

¹ "It is a moveable sideboard or buffet, containing the plate."—*Dyer*

² If

Joyce Fear it not, sir—I have cause though the feast
be prepared for you, yet it serves fit for my wedding-
dinner too. [*Aside, and exit* 21

Enter LAMPREY and SPICHCOCK

Hoa Master Lamprey and master Spichcock, two the
most welcome gentlemen alive! your fathers and mine
were all free a' th' fishmongers

Lam They were indeed, sir You see bold guests,
sir, soon entreated

Hoa. And that's best, sir

Enter Servant

How now, sirrah?

Ser There's a coach come to th' door, sir

[*Exit*

Hoa. My Lady Foxtone, a' my life!—Mistress Jane
Hoard! wife!—Mass, 'tis her ladyship indeed! 31

Enter LADY FOXTONE.

Madam, you are welcome to an unfurnished house, dearth
of cheer, scarcity of attendance

L Fox You are pleased to make the worst, sir

Hoa Wife!

Enter Courtesan

L Fox. Is this your bride?

Hoa Yes, madam.—Salute my Lady Foxtone

Court Please you, madam, awhile to taste the air in
the garden?

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L. Fox. 'Twill please us well 40

[*Exeunt L. FOXTONE and Courtesan.*

Hoa Who would not wed ? the most delicious life !
No joys are like the comforts of a wife

Lam. So we bachelors think, that are not troubled
with them

Re-enter Servant

Ser Your worship's brother, with other ancient gentlemen,¹ are newly alighted, sir [Exit

Hoa Master Onesiphorus Hoard ? why, now our company begins to come in

Enter ONESIPHORUS HOARD, LIMBER, and KIX.

My dear and kind brother, welcome, i'faith

Ones. H You see we are men at an hour, brother 50

Hoa. Ay, i'll say that for you, brother, you keep as good an hour to come to a feast as any gentleman in the shire.—What, old master Limber and master Kix ! do we meet, i'faith, jolly gentlemen ?

Lim We hope you lack guess,² sir ?

Hoa O, welcome, welcome ! we lack still such guess as your worships.

Ones. H Ah, sirrah brother, have you caught up widow Medler ?

Hoa From 'em all, brother, and I may tell you I had mighty enemies, those that stuck sore, old Lucre is a sore fox, I can tell you, brother 62

¹ Old eds "an other ancient gentleman."

² *Guess.*

Ones H Where is she? I'll go seek her out I long to have a smack at her lips

Hoa And most wishfully, brother, see where she comes

Re-enter Courtesan and LADY FOXTONE.

Give her a smack¹ now we may hear it all the house over [Courtesan and *ONES H* start and turn away

Court. O heaven, I am betray'd¹ I know that face

Hoa Ha, ha, ha¹ why, how now? are you both ashamed?—Come, gentlemen, we'll look another way 71

Ones H Nay, brother, hark you come, you're disposed to be merry

Hoa Why do we meet else, man?

Ones H That's another matter I was ne'er so 'fraid in my life but that you had been in earnest

Hoa How mean you, brother?

Ones H You said she was your wife

Hoa Did I so? by my troth, and so she is

Ones H By your troth, brother? 80

Hoa What reason have I to dissemble with my friends, brother? if marriage can make her mine, she is mine Why—— [ONESIPHORUS HOARD is about to retire

Ones H Troth, I am not well of a sudden I must crave pardon, brother, I came to see you, but I cannot stay dinner, i'faith

Hoa I hope you will not serve me so, brother?

Lis By your leave, master Hoard——

¹ Old eds 'smack

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Hoa What now? what now? pray, gentlemen —you
were wont to show yourselves wise men 90

Lim But you have shown your folly too much here

Hoa How?

Kix Fie, fie! a man of your repute and name!
You'll feast your friends, but cloy 'em first with shame.

Hoa This grows too deep, pray, let us reach the sense.

Lim In your old age doat on a courtesan!

Hoa Ha!

Kix Marry a strumpet!

Hoa Gentlemen!

Ones *H* And Witgood's quean! 100

Hoa O! nor lands nor living?

Ones *H* Living!

Hoa [to Courtesan] Speak

Court Alas, you know, at first, sir,
I told you I had nothing!

Hoa Out, out! I am cheated, infinitely cozen'd!

Lim Nay, master Hoard——

Enter LUCRE, WITGOOD, and JOYCE.

Hoa A Dutch widow!¹ a Dutch widow! a Dutch
widow!

Luc Why, nephew, shall I trace thee still a liar?
Wilt make me mad? is not yon thing the widow? 110

Wit Why, la, you are so hard a' belief, uncle! by my
troth, she's a whore

Luc Then thou'rt a knave

Wit *Negatur argumentum*, uncle.

¹ See note 2, p. 300.

Luc Probo tibi, nephew he that knows a woman to be a quean must needs be a knave, thou sayst thou knowest her to be one, *ergo*, if she be a quean, thou'rt a knave

Wit. Negatur sequela majoris, uncle, he that knows a woman to be a quean must needs be a knave, I deny that. 121

Hoa Lucre and Witgood, you're both villains, get you out of my house!

Luc Why, didst not invite me to thy wedding-dinner?

Wit And are not you and I sworn perpetual friends before witness, sir, and were both drunk upon't?

Hoa Daintily abus'd! you've put a junt¹ upon me!

Luc Ha, ha, ha!

Hoa A common strumpet!

Wit Nay, now 130

You wrong her, sir, if I were she, I'd have
The law on you for that, I durst depose for her
She ne'er had common use nor common thought

Court Despise me, publish me, I am your wife,
What shame can I have now but you'll have part?
If in disgrace you share, I sought not you,
You pursu'd, nay,² forc'd me, had I friends would follow it,

Less than your action has been prov'd a rape

Ones H Brother!

Court Nor did I ever boast of lands unto you, 140
Money, or goods, I took a plainer course,

¹ Whore — I do not remember to have met the word elsewhere

² Old eds. "pursued me, nay"

And told you true, I'd nothing :
 If error were committed, 'twas by you ;
 Thank your own folly nor has my sin been
 So odious, but worse has been forgiven ;
 Nor am I so deform'd, but I may challenge
 The utmost power of any old man's love
 She that tastes not sin before [twenty], twenty to one but
 she'll taste it after most of you old men are content to
 marry young virgins, and take that which follows , where,
 marrying one of us, you both save a sinner and are quit
 from a cuckold for ever 152
 And more, in brief, let this your best thoughts win,
 She that knows sin, knows best how to hate sin.

Hoa Curs'd be all malice ! black are the fruits of spite,
 And poison first their owners O, my friends,
 I must embrace shame, to be rid of shame !
 Conceal'd disgrace prevents a public name
 Ah, Witgood ! ah, Theodorus ! 159

Wit Alas, sir, I was pricked in conscience to see her
 well bestowed, and where could I bestow her better than
 upon your pitiful worship ? Excepting but myself, I dare
 swear she's a virgin , and now, by marrying your niece, I
 have banished myself for ever from her : she's mine aunt
 now, by my faith, and there's no meddling with mine
 aunt, you know a sin against my nuncle.¹

Court Lo, gentlemen, before you all [Kneels
 In true reclaimed form I fall
 Henceforth for ever I defy²
 The glances of a sinful eye, 170

¹ A common corruption of *uncle*² Renounce.

Waving of fans ¹ (which some suppose
 Tricks of fancy ²), treading of toes,
 Wringing of fingers, biting the lip,
 The wanton gait, th' alluring trip,
 All secret friends and private meetings,
 Close-borne letters and bawds' greetings,
 Feigning excuse to women's labours
 When we are sent for to th' next neighbour's,
 Taking false physic, and ne'er start
 To be let blood though sign ³ be at heart, 180
 Removing chambers, shifting beds,
 To welcome friends in husbands' steads,
 Them to enjoy, and you to marry,
 They first serv'd, while you must tarry,
 They to spend, and you to gather,
 They to get, and you to father
 These, and thousand, thousand more,
 New reclaim'd, I now abhor

Luc [to WITGOOD] Ah, here's a lesson rioter, for you'

Wit I must confess my follies, I'll down too [*Kne: L*]

¹ "Here Middleton recollected the Palinode which closes *Cynthia's Revels*

' From *secret friends*,

From waving fans, coy glances

JONSON'S *Works*, vol II p 380 ed Giff —Dyce

² Love

³ The editor of 1816 read "sin"—wrongly Dyce remarks that "according to the directions for bleeding in old almanacs, blood was to be taken from particular parts under particular planets," and he adduces a passage from Yarrington's *Two Tragedies in One* —

"Chill let our blood, but yet it is no time

Untill the aygne be gone below the hart" (sig H 4)

And here for ever I disclaim 191
 The cause of youth's undoing, game,
 Chiefly dice, those true outlanders,
 That shake out beggars, thieves, and panders,
 Soul-wasting surfeits, sinful riots,
 Queans' evils, doctors' diets,
 'Potheccaries' drugs, surgeons' glisters,
 Stabbing of arms¹ for a common mistress,
 Riband favours, ribald speeches,
 Dear perfum'd jackets, pennyless breeches, 200
 Dutch flapdragons,² healths in urine;³
 Drabs that keep a man too sure in
 I do defy⁴ you all
 Lend me each honest hand, for here I rise
 A reclaim'd man, loathing the general vice
Hoa. So, so, all friends! the wedding-dinner cools
 Who seem most crafty prove oft-times most fools
[*Exeunt omnes*

¹ "Here again Middleton has an eye to Jonson

'From *stabbing of arms, flapdragons*'—*Works*, *ibid*

To stab their arms with daggers, and drink off the blood mixed with wine, to the health of their mistresses, was formerly a frequent practice among gallants'—*Dyce*

² See note 1, p. 187 Dutchmen had the reputation of being very expert in swallowing flapdragons Cf. Lodowick Barry's *Ram Alley*—

"My brother
 Swallows it with more ease than a Dutchman
 Does flapdragons"

³ There is an allusion to this filthy practice in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, IV. 1

⁴ Renounce

